Quality Assurance Handbook
Chapter 4
Assessment & Awards

Document History

Version	Date	Author	Comment
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4.1. Introduction

Within the academic process it is necessary to have in place effective instruments designed for verifying Learner learning, knowledge and skills. These instruments need also to relate to predetermined learning outcomes and to correspond to clearly defined stages of achievement in the accreditation and awards process. The concept of assessment is one which embraces the range of such instruments of evaluation and assessment currently utilised including - written and practical examinations, practical and project examinations, oral and aural examinations, continuous assessments, examination of supervised professional practice and work placement, and examination of written reports and dissertations. These are the methods used to measure the performance of Learners in achieving the learning outcomes of a programme. Therefore they constitute a core element in the academic quality assurance procedures of National College of Ireland.

All assessment is administered within a framework of formal written regulations as **set out hereunder. These are informed by best practice, NCI's learning, tea**ching and assessment strategy, **and are required by the College's awarding bodies, HETAC and** FETAC[1]. These policies and procedures shall apply to all assessment leading to awards regardless of awarding body. Where a particular awarding body requires a variation to the standard policy and/or procedure, this shall be highlighted.

This policy document follows the following format

- Principles of Assessment
- Conventions of Assessment for HETAC awards
- Implications for other policy areas
- Security and integrity of the assessment process
- External Examining
- Preparing assessment
- Organisation and management of assessment
  - o Assessment timetable
  - o Assessment regulations for learners
  - o Assessment invigilation
  - o Venue management
  - o Assessment for learners with special needs
  - o Assessment for learners for whom English is not a first language
  - o Extenuating circumstance
- Marking Assessment
- Assessment Boards
- Communication of results
- Feedback, Review and Recheck
- Appeal
- Disciplinary Process

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[1] See HETAC (2009) Assessment & Standards; FETAC (2008) Assessment Policy

Principles of Assessment

The principles that follow are organised under six themes.

1. Learners are responsible for demonstrating their learning achievement

A learner who is enrolled on a programme should submit himself or herself to **assessment for the purpose of demonstrating attainment of the programme's** intended learning outcomes[5].
Each learner is expected to strive, with the support of the provider, to develop academic integrity, undertake assessment tasks honestly and truthfully and shun plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty or impropriety.
The provider should ensure that there are learning opportunities for the **programme's intended learning outcomes (except those whic**h are satisfied by prior learning).

2. Assessment supports standards based on learning outcomes
Awards are made and classified exclusively on the basis of criterion referenced assessment of learning outcomes (knowledge, skill and competence.) The learning outcomes required to qualify for HETAC, FETAC, CIPD or ICM awards are specified by the awards standards issued by HETAC, FETAC, CIPD or ICM.

The awards standards describe the standard to be acquired by learners—(i) before a higher education and training award may be made by HETAC or by a recognised institution to which authority to make awards has been delegated by HETAC, or (ii) who request from HETAC recognition of an award made by a body other than HETAC or a recognised institution to which authority to make awards has been delegated; which implies that they describe the learning required to pass.

The minimum intended programme learning outcomes define the minimum learning outcomes for a particular programme at the programme level. These must always be specified through the programme validation process. If the programme contains electives these are captured by variant forms e.g. A and (B or C).

A learner who completes a validated programme is eligible for the relevant award if he or she has demonstrated, through assessment (including by recognition of prior learning), attainment of the relevant minimum intended programme learning outcomes.

In addition to 'minimum intended programme learning outcomes' programme development teams may aspire to desc**ribing other levels of 'intended programme learning outcomes' beyond the minimum. In this document 'intended learning outcomes' refers to all or any of the intended outcomes including the minimum ones and 'minimum intended learning outcomes' refers exclusi**vely to the minimum ones.

Credit, while not a proxy for attained learning outcomes, should normally be linked to achievement of minimum intended module or programme learning outcomes.

3. Assessment promotes and supports effective learning and teaching

Teaching and learning and assessment are linked activities which affect one another. Effective assessment is intrinsic to effective teaching and learning.
Effective assessment is (i) consistent with, (ii) supportive of, and (iii) derived from the intended programme and module learning outcomes.

Assessment should be planned and coordinated across modules and programmes. Both module assessment strategies and programme assessment strategies are necessary for effective assessment.
The effort required of a learner to complete an assessment task should be proportional to the associated educational benefit to him or her.

Formative assessment supports learning and should involve formative feedback and it is an essential part of any programme of education and training.

Teachers and learners share in the responsibilities for effective learning. Involvement of learners in the construction of assessment tasks and criteria can enhance learning.
Authentic assessment supports effective learning.

4. Assessment procedures are credible

Credible assessment is fair and consistent and more specifically it is valid and reliable (i.e. fit for purpose).

Fair assessment is inclusive, recognising that different people can have different learning needs, styles and approaches.

Assessors and any committees with a role in assessment should have the necessary competence and this will likely require that they receive training from time to time.

Any person who would have a conflict of interest (actual or potential, real or apparent) if he/she were to act as an assessor in a particular situation should neither act nor be required to act as an assessor in that situation. This requires that relevant interests should be declared.

There should be appropriate measures to ensure learners are confident about the fairness and objectivity of their assessment procedures.

Anonymous grading of summative assessment, where feasible, is an example of an effective confidence building measure.

The intended programme and module learning outcomes and assessment strategies should be plainly written and communicated at the start of a programme to learners and all those involved with teaching and assessment.
The processes for assessment complaints and appeals should meet the same standards of fairness, consistency and fitness for purpose as assessment in general. In particular they should be straightforward, efficient, timely, and transparent.

5. Assessment methods are reviewed and renewed as necessary to adapt to evolving requirements

Developing and testing new assessment methods, tactics and strategies is necessary for continual enhancement and to cope with emerging challenges.

6. Learners are well informed about how and why they are assessed
Learners need to be familiar with and understand the intended module and programme learning outcomes, relevant programme and module assessment strategies and regularly reminded of these and the assessment regulations.
Programme documentation should inform learners appropriately (e.g. in a programme handbook and programme web page, module guide etc.).
Learners should be involved in the periodic review of assessment procedures.

4.2.   Sectoral conventions for assessment for HETAC awards

The sectoral conventions for assessment comprise a set of regulations and benchmarks which, in the interest of fairness and consistency, are agreed at the sectoral level by HETAC and by all associated providers.

4.2.1.   Sectoral Convention 1:on Award Classifications

The classification of awards shall be criterion referenced as distinct from norm referenced. The following tables describes the classifications available for major awards (made by HETAC or by recognised institutions under delegated authority) in the National Framework of Qualifications along with the required boundary values for grade point average (GPA) and percentage point average (PPA) where the acronyms are defined by Sectoral Convention 4.

National College of Ireland uses the percentage point average (PPA)

Classification of Higher Certificates (Level 6) and Ordinary Bachelor Degrees (Level 7)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description 2009/2010 and following.
Distinction	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly and consistently beyond pass standard in most respects
Merit Grade 1	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in many respects
Merit Grade 2	2.5	50%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in some respects
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Classification of Honours Bachelor degrees (Level 8) and Higher Diplomas (Level 8)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description
First class honours	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly and consistently beyond pass standard in most respects
Second class honours Grade 1	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in many respects
Second class honours Grade 2	2.5	50%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in some respects
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes
Classification of Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description

Distinction	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly and consistently beyond pass standard in most respects
Merit	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in many respects
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Taught Master degrees (Level 9)	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description
First class honours	3.25	70%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly and consistently beyond pass standard in most respects
Second class honours	3.0	60%	Indicative descriptor: Pass and achievement is significantly beyond pass standard in many respects
Pass	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

Classification of Research degrees	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description
Unclassified (recognised as equivalent to an honour classification for progression and employment purposes)	N/A	N/A	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended learning outcomes for the relevant research degree programme.
Other unclassified awards	GPA boundary values	PPA boundary values	Description
Unclassified	2.0	40%	Definitive descriptor: Attains all the minimum intended programme learning outcomes

- A **'Pass' classification of an award is a positive** statement of achievement.

- All awards other than research degrees, minor awards, and supplemental awards shall be classified. However, in exceptional cases, where it is not feasible to classify, an award may be issued as an unclassified award.

- Special purpose awards which have a volume of at least 60 credits and are comparable to a major award (at the same NFQ level) may be classified in accordance with the convention for relevant major award otherwise awards of this type shall be unclassified.

- Providers **shall furnish supplementary information about a person's** attainment and will work with stakeholders to specify and maintain a reporting system that can be understood and used by stakeholders. The Europass Diploma Supplement (EDS) is the channel for this information.

4.2.2. Sectoral Convention 2: on Mixed Grading Systems

Each provider shall adopt either the Percentage grading system or the Alphabetic grading system (for all of its provision), in accordance with the Sectoral Convention 4.

Programmes shall be **validated with reference to the relevant provider's grading** system.

NCI has adopted the percentage grading system.

4.2.3. Sectoral Convention 3: on Determination of Award Classification

Calculation of the award classification shall be based on the credit weighted mean value of the allowable grades (i.e. those that contribute to the classification) for modules of a specific programme A learner may claim exemption from a module whose grade would otherwise contribute to the award classification provided that he or she can demonstrate the attainment of the relevant knowledge, skill and competence. In cases where the attainment cannot be graded fairly and consistently then only an unclassified award shall be available. Procedures for exemption and/or pass by compensation shall not compromise national standards for awards. **Honours classification or any classification higher than 'Pass', shall be made based** on firstattempt grades. Necessary procedures to allow consistent treatment of a repeat grade as a first attempt grade, where exceptional mitigating circumstances exist, shall not compromise this principle.

Accordingly, the existing approach to repeat for honours (i.et is not to be offered) shall be maintained, pending discussions between other awarding bodies (including universities and DIT) with a view to finding an agreed national approach. This position shall be reviewed within 12 months of the commencement of the Conventions.

4.2.4. Sectoral Convention 4: on the Percentage and Alphabetic grading systems

Percentage marks (p) and percentage point values (ppv) are defined in the following table:

Description	Percentage mark	Percentage point value
Passing marks	$40 \leq p \leq 100$	$40 \leq ppv \leq 100$
	$35 \leq p < 40$	$35 \leq ppv < 40$
Outright failing marks	$0 \leq p < 35$	0

The Percentage Point Average (PPA) for a stage is the credit weighted mean of the percentages point values for the constituent modules.

No credit is allocated to a learner in respect of modules which are failed outright.

Alphabetic grades and grade point values are defined by the following table:

Description	Alphabetic grade	Grade point value
Passing grades	A	4.0
	B+	3.5
	B	3.0
	B	2.75
	C+	2.5
	C	2.0
	D	1.5
Outright failing grade	F	0.0

The Grade Point Average (GPA) for a stage is the credit weighted mean of the grade-point values for the constituent modules.
No credit is allocated to a learner in respect of modules which are failed outright.

4.2.5. Sectoral Convention 5: on Post Award Achievement required for an additional major award at the same level

Subject to the following conditions, a graduate holding a higher education and training award may present for and, if successful, achieve a further major award at the same level within the same generic area of study but involving the attainment of new learning outcomes (i.e. post award achievement).

If the area of specialisation of the post award achievement is not substantially different and/or if the associated credit is insufficient for the granting of a new major award, the applicant may be granted a minor, special purpose or supplemental award or a Single Subject Certificate (issued by a recognised institution of the Council or by HETAC).

The following table sets out the minimum volume of newly certified learning required of a candidate seeking to qualify for an additional major award at the same level within the same generic area of study. Please note that repeating learning substantially equivalent to previously certified learning is not included in the calculation of postaward credit in the following table.

Award currently held	Additional award sought	Post award credit for newly certified learning
Higher Certificate	Higher Certificate	A minimum of 60 credits at level 6
Ordinary Bachelor Degree	Ordinary Bachelor Degree	A minimum of 60 credits at level 7
Honours Bachelor Degree	Honours Bachelor Degree	A minimum of 120 credits at least 60 of which are at level 8.
Master's Degree	Master's Degree	A complete programme

4.2.6. Sectoral Convention 6: On ECTS Grade and Grade Interpretation Scheme (EGIS)

Whenever the ECTS Grade and (if appropriate) the ECTS Grade Interpretation Scheme are implemented, it shall be on the basis of a sectoral or national convention.

ECTS Grade is not implemented yet in Ireland. EGIS is described in a draft ECTS **User's Guide and is not implemented yet.**

4.2.7. Sectoral Convention 7: On Exceptions

In exceptional circumstances where, for a particular programme, the legitimate requirements of external authorities conflict with one or more of the Sectoral Conventions and make their application impossible then an alternative arrangement may be used for that programme. Such exceptional arrangements shall be identified on the Europass Diploma Supplement described in the programme assessment strategy and articulated during the programme validation process.

In the case of collaboration between providers using different grading systems, there shall be negotiation and agreement on a joint programme assessment strategy and joint grading system for the collaborative programme and on any necessary conversions of module grades. This shall be addressed during the validation of collaborative programmes and in the context of collaboration and joint awarding agreements etc. Joint awards have a distinct identity and may use an alternative classification system where appropriate.

4.3. Implications for other policy areas

The introduction of this revised assessment policy has implications for the programme development, evaluation and review policy and admissions policies of the College.

4.3.1. Programme Development, Evaluation and Review

Programme Committees are now required to demonstrate at validation or programmatic review the programme and module teaching, learning and assessment strategy. See Chapter 3 Quality Assurance Handbook for revisions to programme development guidelines and guidelines for programme and module handbooks.

4.3.2. Admissions Policies

The admissions policy with respect to applicants requesting recognition of prior learning must refer to the Programme and Module teaching, learning and assessment strategy.

4.4. Security and Integrity of the Assessment Process

4.4.1. Security of learner information

- Any member of staff should not give personal details (address, phone no.) of any learner to another learner under any circumstances.

- The Programme Co-ordinator or Student Services Department will contact a learner on behalf of another learner if required for emergency or other appropriate reasons.

- Change of details such as address should only be actioned when accompanied by a written application from the learner. Learners may now update their own contact details via their record on the student portal.

- Assessment results may not be given over the phone, even to the learner

- Assessment results will be posted using the official transcript to the learner provided address

- Assessment results which are put on noticeboards or made available online should be done so using the learner ID number only

- Information stored on QuercusPlus is protected by individual usernames/passwords and network security.

- The integrity of the learner record is maintained through the use of internet based systems such as QuercusLive (MyCampus) which are securely accessible off site. In exceptional cases where these services are not used,

- o Individual Learner information should not be removed from the College on systems such as memory keys, laptops, floppy disks or other storage devices unless they are encrypted and password protected

- o Learner names should not be included in any off-line spreadsheets etc – the ID number only should be used.

- o Non electronic files should be held securely at all times

- Individual learner information eg learner support etc held in systems other than QuercusPlus eg network files, other database must be password protected at all times and filed on central College servers.

How the effectiveness of this procedure will be assured

Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Director Quality Assurance	Annual (July)	Review to ensure that all results are processed as required and that records are complete for a given academic session
Director Quality Assurance	Spot Check	Spot check on processes such as mystery calling
Manager IT	Spot check	Spot check on network file security as directed by Director QA

4.4.2. Security of Assessment & Related Material

- It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to maintain the highest level of security at all times in relation to production of examination papers. In this regard, the Dean of School should satisfy himself/herself that security at the Faculty and School/Centre Office stage of production is ensured.

- The examination papers or individual questions must not be sent through the internal post.

- Papers being submitted by external post should be done so using registered post

- Papers and questions should be handed to the Programme Co-Coordinator or Examinations Officer concerned in hard copy, on CD or other such storage device, or saved in the dedicated secure area of the network.

- Examinations papers or questions may be transmitted electronically, i.e. via email under the following regulations

     School Responsibility

     - The school will create course level password to be used for all documentation relating to that course.

- The school will issue these instructions and the password to faculty.
- This password must be a combination of letters and numbers and will not be the course code, title or any other similar combination that may identify it
- The School Administrator will ensure that any documentation received that does not comply with these instructions will be notified to the Dean of School, who will then contact the member of faculty and request a new set of documentation

Responsibility of IT Department

- IT department will create 3 email addresses, one for each school/centre
- The IT department will create a directory on the relevant School/Centre drive per semester
- The IT department will disable these email addresses on receipt of the instruction from the Director of Student Services

Responsibility of Director of Student Services

- In consultation with the Deans of School, the Director of Student Services will set a date by which exam documentation can no longer be emailed.
- The Director of Student Services will inform the IT department of the date by which emails will not be accepted

Responsibility of the Sender

Sending the email

- Examination documentation must be created in Microsoft Word.
- The Sender must send the email from their NCI email address. Emails from other addresses will not be accepted. Documentation sent from any other email address will be required to be fully replaced by a new set of documentation.
- The examination paper must be created using the template p**rovided with the 'DRAFT' watermark.**
- This DRAFT watermark will only be removed by the School Administrator when the paper is signed off by both internal and external examiners.
- The Sender must password protect the document attached to the email with the password provided by the School Administrator
- The sender will keep a backup copy of the documentation (this is in the event of the paper being corrupted or the password being incorrectly input by the sender) in a secure place. The sender must ensure that this secure place is appropriate to the storing of sensitive information and it advised to ensure that all electronic copies of examination documentation is password protected and destroyed when it has been submitted and deemed accepted by the Examinations Office

- Ensure that a return receipt is placed on the email sent
- Only Complete papers, marking schemes etc will be accepted. If changes are made, then entire set of documentation must be resubmitted

Responsibility of the Recipient

- The email is sent to ONE email address in each school
- The recipient will save the documentation to the appropriate location in each school
- The recipient will log receipt of the documentation, its status/state of readiness
- All traces of the email and its attachments must be deleted from college systems.

4.4.3. General Security

- The number of staff (both academic and non academic) handling draft examination papers, individual questions, and papers in final form for printing or printed papers should be kept to a minimum.

- At School level, arrangements for security is the responsibility of the Dean of School

- Office doors, filing cabinets and desk drawers should be kept locked if the staff members' office is unattended

- For final printed papers, responsibility rests with the Examinations Office.

- Whether at School level or within the Examinations Office, examination papers are held in one secure location.

- In the case of the External Awarding Bodies where the College does not participate in the production of examination papers, responsibility for the security of papers received from any External Awarding Body rests with the Examinations Office.

- Where a member of NCI staff is participating on a programme, they should not be involved in the examination paper process. It is the Deans of Schools and Director of Student Services's responsibility to ensure that appropriate processes are put in place to manage this

4.4.4. Conflict of Interest

- Internal examiners should declare any potential conflicts of interest eg members of family, acquaintance or other such relationships that may affect the integrity of the assessment process. Deans, subject heads and the Registrar should ensure that steps are taken to prevent any compromise of the assessment process in this case.

- Internal examiners should absent themselves from any deliberations of results of family members, acquaintances other than in cases agreed by the Chair of the Assessment Board.

How the effectiveness of the process will be assured

Monitoring		
Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Registrar	Annually Spot check	Review of any recorded breaches of security Sample security of papers, premises and files during the assessment preparation period
Registar	Each assessment session	Ensure that effective processes have been in place where conflict of interest has been declared

4.5.   External Examining/Authentication

External examining and authentication is a quality assurance mechanism employed by National College of Ireland in order to support public confidence in its academic qualifications.

Ultimately, public confidence rests on its belief that graduates have been objectively judged to have reached the standard that is certified by their qualification (award) in the context of the National Framework of Qualifications.
External examining is particularly concerned with actual programme learning outcomes, their compliance with national standards and, by extension, anything that affects those outcomes.

The external examining process offers an objective interface: a principal outcome of external examining is the introduction of an independent element into the procedures for the assessment of learners.

4.5.1. Definition

An external examiner is an independent expert who is a member of the broader **community of practice within the programme's fi**eld of learning and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfil the responsibilities of the role.

The external examiner's functions can be discharged by an individual or by a team of external examiners. A team approach might be useful, for example, where the needs of the programme demand a range of specialisations that are difficult to find in any individual. The constitution of an external examining team is determined by the needs of the programme. External examiners are often drawn from the higher education community. They can be drawn from other communities of practice provided they have the necessary competences (or acquire them prior to engagement).

It is particularly important to recognise that the role of *external assessor* (where employed) is fundamentally different from that of the external examiner (individual or team). **In research degree programmes the term 'external examiner' is used to refer to an 'external assessor'. The functions of the res**earch degree external examiner are different from those of the taught programme external examiner. An external assessor may also be appointed to assist in the second marking process Iin modules where the number of specialists at NCI is limited.

For the purposes of FETAC awards, the external authenticator fulfils this role.

4.5.2. Role of External Examiners /Authenticator

The role of the External examiner/Authenticator is as follows:

- (Review the appropriateness of the *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* (*i.e.* the programme's basic educational goal), and other programme objectives.
- (Probe the actual attainment of learners (*actual* programme learning outcomes) using information agreed with and supplied by the provider.
- Compare and contrast both the *minimum intended programme learning outcomes* and the actual attainment of learners with the relevant awards standards, with the National Framework of Qualifications, and with corresponding data from other programmes in the same discipline in other higher education institutions in Ireland and beyond.
- Determine whether or not the applied procedures for assessment are *valid, reliable, fair and consistent*.

- Review the appropriateness of the programme assessment strategy, assessment procedures and flowing from this, subsidiary module assessment strategies

- Review key assessment tasks prior to their assignment whilst taking account of prior learnings. Where key tasks include continuous assessment, it may not be feasible to view prior to assignment, however they should be reviewed.

- Report findings and recommendations to the College

These principles are consistent with the role of External Authenticator appointed for FETAC awards.

Code of Practice
The external examiner/authenticator will undertake to:
- exercise their role with utmost integrity and professionalism when undertaking external authentication for a provider
- comply with policies and procedures specifically in relation to awards and assessment
- **fully comply with NCI's policies and procedures**
- inform NCI of any potential conflict of interest which may compromise their role
- inform NCI of availability
- communicate appropriately with NCI and inform them of planned visits and information required
- provide constructive feedback to the management and staff
- compile an external examiner/authentication report on time and based on an independent evaluation of the process and procedures.

4.5.3. Appointment & Selection of External Examiners/External Authenticators

Deans of School shall ensure that all External Examiners nominated for appointment satisfy the following criteria prior to nomination to the Academic Council for Approval.

- Nominees to serve as External Examiners should be suitably qualified academic experts in the relevant disciplines with current or recent experience in third level teaching, research, or in relevant commercial, industrial or professional fields.

- External Examiners will normally be drawn from the Irish or overseas higher education sector. The School will be mindful of the significance of the European dimension of Higher Education in the appointment of teams of External Examiners. In the case of FETAC awards, external examiners or authenticators may also be drawn from the FETAC panel of external authenticators.

- When appointing External Examiner/s to a programme or set of programmes the School will be mindful of the ability of the examiner/s to deal with the full range of module areas covered on the programme.

- The School will consider all appointments of External Examiners in the context of the ongoing development of academic disciplines within the college and of the college's strategic development.

- Any ex-staff member employed by National College of Ireland within the previous five years who are suitably qualified to act as an external examiner will not be eligible for appointment as External Examiners of the college.

- External examiners should be suitably qualified with a minimum of an honours degree or equivalent. External examiner nominations/appointments should be such as to ensure maximum objectivity.

- Normally, an external examiner drawn from academic life should hold an academic qualification, in the appropriate discipline, of a level higher than that of the programme(s) to which he/she has been nominated. In general only persons associated with degree and postgraduate programme delivery in their own institutions should be nominated for degree programmes in NCI.

- The School should take due cognisance of the desirability of gender balance when nominating teams of external examiners.

- It is wholly inappropriate for individuals to canvass NCI on their own behalf for the purpose of seeking a nomination as an external examiner.

- Nominations for external examiners are forwarded by the Dean of School by the agreed date to the Registrar. The Dean of School will normally be required to make a number of nominations greater than the number of vacancies arising to ensure that external examiner positions within the college are appointed. The Academic Standards & Policy Committee will recommend a list of External Examiners to Academic Council for approval.

- Prior to recommending external examiners to Academic Council, the Academic Standards & Policy Committee will ensure that an appropriate mix of institutions is represented across the Irish and international education sector. Normally, the incoming external examiner will not be from the same institution as the outgoing external examiner, No more than 1 external examiners should come from one institution in a given subject area.

o On appointment, the External Examiner will be provided with the following documentation

- The programme validation documentation
- The programme Handbook
- Module descriptors and guides
- The current Programme and module assessment strategy
- Assessment policies of the College

- The External Examiner will be invited to a meeting with the Dean, Programme Director and other members of the programme team. This may take place as a formal induction process in the case where a number of external examiners are being appointed at one time, or on an individual basis where individual appointments are being made.

- The normal period of appointment of external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes is three years. This may be exceptionally extended to four years with the permission of the Dean of the relevant Faculty. An external examiner will not normally be re-appointed within the three years following completion of their three, (or four year) contract.

4.5.4. Discontinuation of appointment

Under certain circumstances, the appointment of an external examiner may be discontinued by the College or the individual examiner before the completion of his/her period of appointment.

Where an external examiner resigns prior to the expiry of the appointed term the appropriate School is responsible for obtaining written confirmation of the resignation, advising the **Registrar's Office** and nominating a replacement.

In the event of unsatisfactory performance, the College reserves the right to terminate employment at any time during the period of appointment. The decision to discontinue shall be based on a statement detailing the proposed grounds for discontinuation and submitted to the Vice President/President for final decision. The **Registrar's Office** will inform the external examiner in writing of the decision and it will be reported to the School and Academic Council.

4.5.5. Duties of the External Examiner

Approval of Assessments and other materials

It is the duty of External Examiners to agree the drafts of all examination papers, individual assessments that contribute to 40% of more of summative assessment for a module, marking schemes and model answers where applicable, before the examination papers/assessments are finalised.

The External Examiner shall ensure that the assessment properly reflects the syllabi and approved programme schedules. External examiner comments on all assessment and examination papers are recorded the annual Module Evaluation Forms.

External Examiners shall decide, in consultation with the Internal Examiner,

- The particular draft assessment briefs, examination papers, model answers and marking schemes to be assessed, prior to the examination.

- The particular marked examination scripts (s)he wishes to assess

- The nature and content of other assessment material (s)he wishes to assess, including programme coursework.

The Dean of School shall ensure that such material is provided to the External Examiner in good time and the Deans of Schools will ensure the timely submission of examination papers, assessments and sample scripts are made available when requested.

Where the External Examiner wishes to suggest amendments to draft examination papers (s)he may do so.

The External Examiner shall indicate on the Module/Subject marking sheet any proposed amendments by the Internal Examiner. Efforts should be made to achieve consensus in relation to such proposed amendments.

The External Examiner may comment on such matters relating to individual Learner performance, module performance, or programme performance as (s)he deems necessary. The Examination Board shall give due consideration to such comments.

The External Examiner may request to have his/her dissenting opinion on any matter recorded on the Broadsheet.

The Internal Examiner shall take such proposed amendments into account, and shall make the necessary adjustments.

If the external examiner feels that circumstances exist that might constitute a conflict of interest, he/she shall bring this to the attention of the Dean of School/Registrar who will make such arrangements as are necessary to negate the conflict of interest.

Oral examinations

Where relevant, External Examiners with specific responsibility for modern languages shall normally be expected to attend for all or part of the Oral competence assessment sessions held at the college in respect of programmes for which such assessments are specified in the approved programme schedule as an examination requirement.

Where such assessments are carried out in the absence of the External Examiner an audio recording of the assessments shall be made and a representative sample of this recorded material shall be monitored by the External Examiner as part of his/her duties.

4.5.6. Assessment

Following an examination, the External Examiner is required to see representative samples of assessment material presented by candidates. The sample should normally include the best script, a number of borderline scripts at each level in the case of award years and a random sample of the remainder, with sufficient material, including where feasible, relevant statistical data to enable the External Examiner(s)

to form a judgment as to the appropriateness of the marking at all levels of classification. All assessments will have been second marked in accordance with the College policy and only the agreed mark will be sent to the External Examiner.
The External Examiner should receive the following:

- A sample of scripts as specified above.

- Programme work for this sample where practicable / applicable

- Copies of the assessment brief, examination paper, marking schemes, and model solutions.

- Original of the college's mark sheet showing the aggregation and final mark for each candidate in a module.

- The external examiner shall return the signed and dated marks sheet to the examinations office without delay.

- Statistical data: Classification statistics, Pass rates, average mark and standard deviation for specific modules

- External Examiners shall normally attend the college at the time of determination of co-ordinating results and at such other times as may be determined by the college in consultation with the External Examiner for the purpose of assessing the standard of the programme/programme and/or the standard of Learner performance.

The appropriateness of examination materials to the level of award concerned shall be a primary consideration of the External examiner.

External Examiners shall determine whether:

The assessment and determination of awards processes have been fairly conducted.

The standard of the Learner performance is adequate for the relevant stage of the programme.

The External Examiner shall pay particular attention in award years of a programme/programme, to the spread of marks achieved and the grades of award attributed.

Duties of the External Authenticator (FETAC awards)

The Authenticator must confirm and agree their availability with NCI to under take the role for the specific Certification period (key certification dates are available on www.fetac.ie) for which they are required and for the duration deemed necessary by the Authenticator in light of the work involved. In order to carry out the role the authenticator may need to be released from their employer.
In confirming availability the Authenticator should agree dates and times for the authentication visit. The date and time of the authentication visit should then be confirmed, in writing to NCI

If an authenticator is contacted and has agreed to conduct the process for several different centres spread over a range of different locations, it will be necessary to create a plan and schedule of visits.

The external authentication process should be completed in sufficient time.to ensure **that the centre can meet FETAC's published dates for the end of each cert**ification period.

Arrangements with regard to remuneration are agreed between the NCI and the individual authenticator. If an authenticator from the FETAC panel has been contacted to carry out this role by NCI, they will need to confirm and agree specific arrangements including remuneration prior to appointment

The Authenticator should agree, based on the work involved, an appropriate fee and expenses with the NCI in advance of conducting the external authentication

On appointment, the external authenticator will be sent details of the role and responsibility of the external authenticator, copies of FETAC documentation relating to policy and procedure that relate to assessment

Plan and agree visit arrangements
Once the Authenticator has agreed to conduct the external authentication on behalf of the NCI, the next step is to arrange a visit to the centre(s).
It is good practice to prepare an agenda or visit plan in advance and to confirm information required on the day with the NCI.
The agenda will include;
- identification of the awards for which results are to be externally authenticated
- **plans for sampling learners' evidence (applying NCI's sampling strategy)**
- learner evidence that is required on the day
- staff that are required to be available
- feedback to NCI (a brief session providing verbal feedback at the end of the visit)

Request information
Prior to the visit the Authenticator should request that the following information be made available;
- the appropriate award specification(s) for the major, special purpose or supplemental awards for which results are to be authenticated
- list of learner group(s) from which the sample is to be selected
- sampling strategy i.e. how NCI ensures a representative sample is available to the Authenticator and the basis on which the sample is to be selected by the Authenticator
- assessment plan
- internal verification report(s)
- assessment instruments i.e. briefs, examination papers
- marking schemes for specific assessment activities and outline solutions where appropriate
- if authenticating learner evidence from more than one centre, details on how and where learner evidence is to be made available

Carrying out the external authentication

In conducting the authentication process, the Authenticator will;
- check internal verification report(s) and authenticate the findings/outcomes
- **sample a range of learner evidence using NCI's sampling strategy**
- moderate assessment results in accordance with standards outlined in the Award Specification
Review Internal verification report(s)

The internal verification report should be available to the Authenticator in advance of conducting the external authentication process. The Authenticator reviews the internal verification report(s) and confirms the findings/outcomes

Sampling a range of evidence

The Authenticator applies NCI 's sampling strategy in selecting an appropriate sample of learner evidence to moderate. The Authenticator should be made aware of **NCI's sampling strategy prior to commencing. NCI's current sampling strategy** is to sample 10-20% of a group depending on size. In the case of small class sizes (less than 20), all learner assessment is sampled.
Guidelines on sampling are given in the Assessment Guidelines for Providers;
http://www.fetac.ie/assessment/Quality_Assuring_Assessment_Guidelines_for_Providers_May_2007.doc
The Authenticator will agree in advance the Authenticator's intentions to sample and the specific sample to be selected. This should be incorporated in the visit plan/agenda.
The following should be noted in relation to sampling;
- it is the Authenticator, not NCI who selects the evidence to be sampled, applying the sampling strategy.
- the sample must be sufficient to enable the Authenticator to make an informed judgement on the consistency of the assessment decisions in the context of the award standards
- the sample should reflect the spread of grades and borderline grades i.e. Pass, Merit, Distinction, to ensure grading criteria are being applied consistently
- if the Authenticator is moderating results from a number of assessors and programmes then the sample of evidence should reflect each assessor and each programme sufficiently
- if the Authenticator is moderating results from a number of centres for NCI, the sample should reflect all centres sufficiently
- New assessor judgements/decisions should be sampled at least once during the assessment cycle

If significant issues are identified within a sample; the evidence for the whole cohort of learners from which the sample was taken should be reviewed by the authenticator

Moderating Assessment Results
Confirming fair and consistent assessment of learners in according with national standards is undertaken through moderation of assessment results. Moderation is the process whereby the marked learner evidence presented is judged by the authenticator according to the standards outlined in the Award Specification.

Moderating assessment results involves reviewing results and checking the standard of evidence at each grade band: Successful (levels 1 - 3), Distinction, Merit, Pass (levels 4 - 6) by examining *samples* of evidence within each grade band and at the borders of grades
The critical points at which judgment is applied are the boundaries between bands/grades: Referred Pass/Merit, Merit/Distinction, unsuccessful / pass
To moderate the assessment results, the Authenticator;
- reviews the awards standards in the appropriate award specification
- reviews the grading criteria
- confirms assessment techniques and instruments and ensures consistency with award requirements
- confirm assessment criteria and marking sheets are appropriate
- judges a sample of learner evidence and results to ensure consistency with the award standard and grading criteria.

Grading criteria describe what a learner must attain to achieve a particular grade for an award at a particular level. Grading criteria for Awards at levels 1 – 6 are outlined in FETAC guidelines for assessment

The Moderation process
In order to moderate the assessment results the authenticator will apply the following steps;
- Review the results presented by the School on the provisional results reports paying particular attention to the spread of grades at; Distinction, Merit, Pass, Successful, Referred
- **Select the sample of evidence, applying NCI's sampling strategy and ensure a** spread across the different grade bands and at the borderline between grades
- Establish the grade cut-off points (see below)
- Review the standard of the evidence at each grade band i.e.
 Levels 1 - 3
      Successful
         Levels 4 - 6
         Pass   50%
         Merit   65%
         Distinction   80%
- For Levels 1 – 3 select a sample of the portfolios
- For Levels 4 – 6 select within the sample the learner evidence which have the lowest mark and the highest mark on the border lines between the grades i.e.;
- Lowest Pass/Highest unsuccessful
- Lowest Merit/Highest Pass
- Lowest Distinction/Highest Merit
- Examine the evidence within the sample with reference to the learning **outcomes in the award specification and the programme's assessment** criteria and marking sheets.
- Make a judgment as to whether the evidence meets the national standard required at this grade with reference to the grading criteria.

If the EA agrees with the result given by the assessor, this is confirmed on the marking sheet and results report in the external authenticator column.

If the EA disagrees with the result given by the assessor, all of the grades for that assessor should be identified and all marks adjusted accordingly.

4.5.7. Examination Appeals

External Examiners shall be asked where necessary, to review scripts / continuous assessment / projects where the final marks are appealed. The appeals process is explained in full within the rechecks and reviews section of this manual.

4.5.8. Attendance at Examination Board/Results Approval Meetings

All programme External Examiners will be expected to visit the college *at least* once in each academic year. This visit will normally take place at the time of determination of final results in summer. Examiners may also be required to visit College on other occasions in order to examine scripts or other assessment material. In the case of programmes or examination modules where repeat examinations are held in the

Autumn, or at such other times as may be approved by Academic Council, the attendance of one External Examiner will be arranged as appropriate.

External authenticators for FETAC awards will not normally attend results approval

4.5.9. Reporting by External Examiners/External Authenticators

External Examiners are required to submit a full report on each examination with which they are involved not later than September 30th for HETAC awards. A copy of this report is listed in an Appendix 5 to this manual. The report should cover both summer and autumn examinations and should be made in sufficient detail to enable the Programme Committee to derive substantial benefit from its contents.   On **receipt of this report by the Registrar, the Exam's office will arrange payment of External Examiner's Fee.**
This report should be sent to the Registrar on the appropriate report form
(Appendix 5)

In the case of FETAC awards, the report will be submitted to the Programme Director following the external authenticator visit. The programme director will forward this report to the Registrar.

The Registrar will make a copy of each report available to the Dean of School. The Dean of School will ensure that the contents of the report are communicated appropriately staff and to the relevant programme committees.

The Dean of School shall respond to these reports by the 30th October and shall advise the Academic Policy and Standards Committee by report of any actions taken to address matters arising from the external examiners reports or any other comments or reactions from the School to the content of the reports. This shall serve as feedback to Academic Council.

4.5.10. Communications with External Examiners/Authenticators

On appointment the External Examiner/External Authenticator will receive from the **Registar's** Office, the following documentation:

- Description of role and duties as appropriate

- Report forms

- Programme Quality Assurance documentation

- Programme / module syllabi

Following the examination, the Examinations Office shall make available to the External Examiner, a representative sample of scripts, project work and any other materials submitted for assessment including programme work. A record of material made available shall be kept by the Examinations Office and its return shall also be noted.

The External Examiner shall be advised in good time by the Registrar's Office as to the times and dates of proposed examinations and assessment boards.

The internal examiner or module guardian is responsible for ensuring that all assessments, examinations papers, marking schemes etc are
- sent in good time and to the external examiner and

- are of a sufficient quality to be examined

4.6. Preparing Assessment

(For a diagrammatic representation of this process, please refer to Assessment Process Document QASS-4VAP1)

The internal examiner is responsible for ensuring the preparation of all assessment materials. Where a module is being delivered in the same semester by more than 1 lecturer, the module guardian/leader is responsible for preparing materials. All lecturers delivering the module must be consulted in the preparation of assessment materials.

4.6.1. Format of Examination Papers

The cover page of each examination paper shall show the following:
- The College title and logo
- Date and time of examination
- Programme title
- Programme Stage*
- Level of the programme award
- Title of subject in accordance with approved programme schedules
- Time allowed
- Instructions to candidates
- Additional materials required
- List of attachments
- Number of pages listed
- Names of Internal examiners
- Names of External examiners

*It is important to note that the stage of the programme may not be the year of delivery. Due to the nature of part-time programmes stage 2 may be delivered in year 3 of the delivery cycle.

The Internal examiner (module owner) shall submit to the Examinations Office all examination papers or part examination papers, for which he/she is responsible*, that have been reviewed and agreed with the External Examiner*, in accordance with the dates and conditions specified by the College. Each paper will be accompanied by a marking scheme, outline answers and/or model solutions as appropriate.

In order to assure the quality of assessment, all summative assessment should be internally reviewed by the subject group or appropriate review group appointed by the School prior to being submitted to the External Examiner. This process should assist in ensuring that the assessment tests the appropriate programme learning outcomes as approved and that any anomalies or inaccuracies can be detected.

In preparing such material, the Internal Examiner(s) shall have regard to the following:

a) Examination papers must provide unambiguous instructions to candidates specifying the number of questions to be attempted and the marks allocated for each question or part thereof;

b)   Where special materials, tables, stationery, dictionary, calculator or equipment are permitted in an invigilated assessment, these are to be clearly specified and notified to the candidates in advance.

c)   The maintenance of the established standards for the programme.

d)   Conformity with assessment specifications as defined in these regulations.

e)   Consistency of terminology and clarity of expression in examination papers

f)   The relevant standards and conventions of the discipline.

g)   In the preparation of marking schemes the Internal Examiner will clearly outline the marking scheme of an examination/assignment so as to ensure that any examiner can correct the assessment in a case where the Internal Examiner is unavailable to correct.

h)   In the preparation of examination papers and/or coursework, the Internal Examiner will ensure that there is sufficient differentiation in examination papers/tests from one year to another. Whilst previous examination papers should provide guidance to learners on how the paper may be presented, questions should not be repeated using the same exemplars or numbers.

The Internal Examiner(s) shall ensure that the context and overall balance of the examination paper is satisfactory, having regard to the syllabus and the standard of the programme and the examination.

Where there is more than one Internal Examiner involved in the preparation of an examination paper, then appropriate consultations shall take place between them concerning the formulation of the proper balance on the examination paper.

Draft examination papers for first sitting and second sitting should be issued to the External Examiners by the School not later than four weeks prior to the examination date(s). External Examiners will be required to return comments no later than two weeks following receipt of draft examination papers.

The Internal Examiner(s) shall give due consideration to suggestions, criticisms and amendments proposed by the External Examiner(s) either provided verbally or in the External Examiners Annual Report.

The Internal Examiner(s) shall ensure that proof copies of the examination paper, including any special requirements and special attachments, are checked for accuracy prior to the commencement of the examination.

It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to ensure that the final examination paper is deposited with the Examinations Office 10 working days before the examination is due to take place. The draft must include all special diagrams and tables and be in a sealed envelope.

Failure to deposit the final paper with the Examinations Office 10 working days prior to examination will normally result in the examination being postponed.

In the event of the Dean of School being unavailable through unforeseen circumstances, the Programme Director will assist in ensuring that the examination paper is deposited with the Examinations Office.

4.6.2.   Preparation of Coursework

All summative coursework items (ie items that form part of the learners end of year mark/grade) are subject to the following regulation

In preparing such material, the Internal Examiner shall have regard to the following:

a. Coursework items must provide unambiguous instructions to candidates specifying the number of questions to be attempted where appropriate and the marks allocated for each question or part thereof;

b. The maintenance of the established standards for the programme.

c. Conformity with assessment specifications as defined in these regulations.

d. Consistency of terminology and clarity of expression in assignment briefs

e. The relevant standards and conventions of the discipline.

f. The Internal Examiner shall ensure that the context and overall balance of the coursework item is satisfactory, having regard to the syllabus and the standard of the programme.

g. Where there is more than one Internal Examiner involved in the preparation of a coursework item, then appropriate consultations shall take place between them concerning the formulation of the proper balance on the coursework item

h. The internal examiner will discuss the continuous assessment approach with the external examiner at the end of the appropriate semester.

i. Where a single piece of coursework has a weighting of 40% or more, The title(s) of project/assignment and resit project/assignments should be agreed with the External Examine at least 2 weeks prior to the announcement of the coursework item to students

j. Consideration of suggestions, amendments and/or criticisms either **provided verbally or outlined in the External Examiner's Annual Report** should be applied in the setting of future assessments for the module.

k. A representative sample of these coursework items should be sent to the external examiner after correction by the Internal Examiner

4.7. Structure of Assessment

4.7.1. Module Assessment Strategy

Each programme and module will have an assessment strategy which will be approved at validation and monitored annually by the Programme Committee/Subject group. It is strongly encouraged that this takes place at the end of the preceding academic year. The following regulations set out the principles by which assessment strategies should be formulated.

4.7.2. Typical Models of assessment

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Module is assessed by 1 piece of work e.g Project/Essay/Dissertation	Module is assessed by 2 items of assessment Project/Essay Final Examination	Module is assessed by several pieces of small continuous assessment Ass 1 10% Ass 2 10% **Ass 3….** 10% …. Ass 10 10%	Module is assessed by several pieces of small continuous assessment and 1 terminal exam/project Ass 1 10% Ass 2 10% Ass 3 5% Ass 4 5% Major work/exam 70%

The models of assessment outlined above are typical of assessment structures currently in use at National College of Ireland. These are indicative and by no means meant to be limiting.

The programme and module assessment strategy should link the programme assessment instruments, including continuous assessment and repeat assessment to the minimum and any other intended learning outcomes as well as to the module and stage learning outcomes.   Module assessment strategies must clearly outline

- If all summative assessments should be attempted and if not, why not.
- The designation of some elements of work which specifically assess a learning outcome **as 'must pass'**
- Depending on the structure of assessment, should the learner pass the exam and pass continuous assessment as a whole
- In order to ensure that minimum programme learning outcomes are met, can this module be compensated with any module or with a defined set of modules

- In considering the rationale for an assessment, the module assessment strategy should clearly outline how the overall mark for a module should be calculated. These should be written into the programme and module documentation provided to learners.
- This should carefully review how each programme learning outcome has been assessed and if in calculating the overall mark for a module, a learner will have been passed without passing each learning outcome of the programme.

4.7.3. Repeat Assessment

Having agreed the structure and calculation rules of assessment, a decision is then required on how to manage repeat assessment for the models as presented above. Any repeat assessment must be set in order to test the learning outcomes that the learner has not passed, therefore the module assessment strategy must clearly outline how a learner who fails a particular assessment and its associated learning outcome(s) can be reassessed. The available options are:

- The learner repeats the specific assessment that s/he has failed eg a project is repeated by a project, presentation by presentation etc.

- The internal examiner sets a new assessment which tests the same learning outcomes that the original assessment was set to test (eg a project may be replaced by an examination if appropriate)

The learner will retain any marks gained in any previous sittings of the module for other elements of assessment that have been passed.

4.7.4. Repeating a year

The option to 'repeat by examination only' is no longer to be offered.

The learner will retain any marks gained in any previous sittings for elements of the module not being reassessed. In the case where a module is no longer offered or the assessment structure of a module has changed, the learner must undertake to be assessed under the new assessment structure.

4.7.5. Assessment of Joint/Group Projects

Where two or more candidates present a joint project, the individual contribution and performance of each candidate should be assessed, and individual marks awarded accordingly.

Joint Assessment is the marking of examinable material submitted by more than one candidate

Material may include – project, research, analysis, work, assignment or any combination thereof

Joint assessment by its nature allows or is prone to some or all of the following features:

- Unequal effort by the participants
- Plagiarism
- Subjective marking

To address the teamwork aspect and the abuses the following procedures should be followed:

- The format for the assignment should permit a logical fragmentation to allow a sharing-out among the participants. – examples of such are

  All students get separate tasks within a group project, which are assessed separately.

  All students get the same mark, e.g. 23 out of 30. These are then aggregated, e.g. 69 for a group of three students. They can negotiate individual marks, so long as these add up to 69, i.e. a=28, b=19, c=22.

  All students get the same mark for the product of the group and then peers assess contributions to process out of an additional ten marks, e.g. a=23+9, b=23+4, c=23+7.

  All students get the same mark for original task and then get different marks for an additional task.

  All get the same group mark for the product, then get individual marks for performance in a group viva.

  All get the same mark for the original task, but differentiation is achieved in an exam task based on the group work, where those who worked hard at the first task would be better placed to answer well in the exam.

- It is not permitted for all to get the same mark without consideration of the above

- Where possible, participants should be placed in balanced teams/groups selected by the lecturer.

- Assessment should be continuous throughout the time period allowed for completion.

- A viva voce examination may form part of the assessment process for joint projects.

4.8.   Assessment Submission

4.8.1. Submission

All assessments at level 6 and above[2] are to be submitted

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[2] Turnitin is installed behind Moodle. For assignments that cannot be processed against Turnitin eg computer code, maths questions etc, Moodle will be the

- Electronically Via Moodle/Turnitin

And

- In hard copy to the relevant school co-ordinator in accordance with the project submission schedule as outlined in the programme handbook.

Where a lecturer advises learners that a hard copy is not required, the lecturer must make arrangements to ensure that copies of the corrected assessment are available for the external examining, feedback and appeals processes.

A common submission sheet is to be submitted with all assessment. This sheet will outline the College plagiarism policy (as in section 4.4.5) and a declaration that all work submitted is that of the learner and that s/he has read and understood the plagiarism regulations.

Learners should be aware that it may take some time for Turnitin to process submission reports and should ensure that submission is not left until the last minute.

Training for learners on the use of Turnitin will be provided as part of the information services orientation and training service.

Normally, the deadline for Coursework submissions by

- Full-time Learners is 4.00pm or before on the due date of projects.
- Part time Learners is by 9pm at the School office* on or before the date required (or by 5pm in the case of Saturday deadlines)

*The School office should have a post box available for this purpose. These can be hand-delivered or in the case of off-campus students posted.

Projects which are received after the deadline, if sanctioned by the Programme Director, should be forwarded to the relevant Programme Co-ordinator for the programme. Medical certification or a Personal Circumstances Form must also be submitted with the late project submission

4.8.2. Receipting of Coursework

On submission of coursework via Moodle/Turnitin, the learner will receive an email receipt. This is the official receipt of submission. Receipts for hard copy submissions will not be issued.

4.8.3. Penalty

In the case of an extension not being requested, not being granted or being exceeded, the following penalties apply to each piece of coursework:

- Up to one week late from the time and date of submission 10% of the mark awarded for the essay/project will be deducted.

receipting system. This needs to be clarified from an IT perspective and after the trial being currently undertaken

- For every week after the first week and up to the sixth a further 5% will be deducted from the mark awarded.

Any coursework received after a six-week period will attain a zero mark.

4.9. Organisation & Management of Assessment

4.9.1. Assessment Schedule

It is strongly encouraged that programme committees plan programme and module assessment strategies at the end of the previous academic year in order to assist in the planning of the following academic year.

The assessment schedule for all assessments other than terminal examinations is set annually by the Programme Committee. This is published prior to the commencement of teaching in the programme handbook and on MyNCIStudent (student portal)

When setting the schedule, the Programme Committee should ensure an appropriate balance of assessment throughout the semester/term.

The assessment schedule should be made available to the Examinations Office in order to ensure that the integrity of mid-term/semester assessments held under examination conditions is maintained. This includes provision of appropriate scripts, security of papers, external examiner arrangements and invigilation.

Schools should endeavour to arrange such assessments within the same week to allow for the efficient operation of the assessments.

Terminal examinations are timetabled by the Examinations Office and are published at the end of Week 8 for semesterised programmes.

Timetables for non semesterised programmes will be made available 4 weeks before the commencement of the examination period.

4.9.2. Scheduling of assessment for learners with extenuating circumstance

In the case where learners may have missed a mid term examination, laboratory or other summative assessment where an extension to the submission deadline is not possible, the Programme Committee should provide for a day/series of days in the semester where such events will take place. In some cases due to the timing of the assessment, learners may have to take the assessment in the repeat session but it will be treated as a first attempt.

4.9.3. Scheduling of Repeat Assessment

Repeat assessment should be scheduled as early as possible.

Repeat assessment may include examination, submission dates for continuous assessment, laboratories etc.

The repeat examination timetable for the autumn sitting will be made available 4 weeks in advance of the commencement of examinations.

Regardless of when the assessment is sat, assessment sat as repeat assessment will be considered by the Autumn assessment board. Assessment sat as a 1st sitting will be considered by the Summer assessment board.

4.10. Management of Assessment taken under examinations conditions

4.10.1. Duties of Examinations Officer

A major function of the Examinations Officer is to ensure an orderly start and finish for the sessions on that day, in accordance with the exam schedule.

The role of the Examinations Officer is to ensure the academic credibility of exams is maintained. In order to carry out this function, the Examinations Officer or proxy must be available for the full duration of the examinations.

In broad terms the duties of the Examinations Officer are as follows:

- Make the him/herself known to the Senior Invigilator for that session. Check that everything is in order.

- Check that the answer books and seating arrangements have been adhered to.

- Check that Learners have not brought books and coats into exam room.

- Walk between aisles and check discreetly that there are no obvious illegal crib notes on table tops, stuck on calculators or written on back of hands etc.

- Patrol exam centre at least one other time during the session, to ensure all is well.

- In the event of there being a mistake on an examination paper that cannot be answered in the normal way, the Examinations Officer may be required to make a decision (of say interpretation). In that event, the Examinations Officer should record the learner instruction to the Learner(s) and pass this on to the Registrar.

4.10.2. Assessment invigilation

Instructions to Invigilator - Examination Procedures

The Invigilator should collect the Examination Papers, Examination Scripts, Invigilator's Report Form (Appendix 6) and the Sign-in-Sheet from the examinations office, at least 15 minutes prior to the commencement of examination. It is crucial that everything is cleared and brought back from the examination room to the examinations office once the examination has ended.

Invigilators may not bring reading materials into the examination room and should not communicate with each other unless it is relevant to the examination.

The Learners are assigned a numbered desk which is published for them outside the

examination room. Before the Learners enter the examination room, the invigilator(s) should place an examination booklet on each numbered desk. Thirty minutes into the examination any unused answer books should be collected.

Invigilators must ensure that desks are completely clear of all bags, coats, notes, books, except those permitted by regulation and specified for the examination. The learner will be informed of anything that is permitted, but the invigilator must ensure that there are random checks made of dictionaries etc.

No food or drinks are allowed into the examination room, except with prior approval of the Registrar.

No hats are permitted to be worn by the Learners.

Nothing should be on the Learners desk only the writing material and Learner card, unless otherwise specified e.g. No pencil cases. The Learners should be instructed to bring all valuables into the examination room.

Invigilators should ensure that all candidates are seated in their correct place 10 minutes before the commencement of the examination. When distributing the examination papers, the Invigilators should instruct each candidate not to turn over the paper until the general instruction to do so is given.

No candidate will be admitted to the examination room more than half hour after the start of the examination. In exceptional circumstances, however and provided that no other candidate has withdrawn and left the examination room, a candidate may be admitted later, at the discretion of the Examinations administrator.

The Invigilator will announce that no candidate is permitted to leave the room in the **first 'half hour' or in the last 'half hour'**. The Invigilator should instruct candidate's to place their Learner card on the desk. They also advise all candidates how to complete the cover sheet of the answer booklet. It is important to indicate that their registration number must be written clearly on the booklet and their desk number written in the top right hand corner. Candidates are requested to read the instruction at the head of the question paper before starting work.

Candidates may leave the examination room to use the toilet or first-aid facilities but must be accompanied by an invigilator. The invigilator should record this information opposite their names on the sign in sheet. If a Learner leaves the room without reason or accompaniment, they are deemed to have finished their examination and are not permitted to re-enter the examination room.

Invigilators should circulate around the room during the programme of the examination.

First Aid provisions should be made known to all Invigilators. Invigilators will be briefed regarding individual medical conditions.

The following details should be recorded by the Invigilator

Number of candidates present in the examination room.

Record of candidates who receive extra scripts beside the name on the sign-in-sheet.

The Invigilator's Report Form should be completed legibly and in full.

Invigilators should ensure that candidates sign beside their name on the sign-in-sheet and check that this corresponds with the details on the Learner card. These lists should be included with the scripts at the end of the examination.

In the event of an invigilator seeing apparently untoward behaviour, they must immediately and discreetly bring it to the attention of the Examinations Officer.

Actions for Untoward behaviour

In the event of a suspected case of breach of examination regulations, the invigilator and a witness where possible will ensure the following procedure is followed:

- Collect suspect evidence in breach of examination regulations or in the case of oral communication, inform the Learner that the activity is in breach of examination regulations and that the incident is going to be reported and brought to the attention of the Examinations Office.

- Contact the Examinations Office and inform the examinations administrator of what has occurred. The examinations administrator will then inform the Director of Learner Life immediately

- Ensure the details are recorded fully and accurately on the form provided at Appendix 6. (To be signed by Invigilator concerned, and Senior Invigilator for the session).

- Ensure the evidence is attached to the form in the case of notes etc.

The Senior Invigilator and Examinations Officer should discreetly interview the Learner concerned (before he/she leaves the exam room). Check that the recorded details are correct. Record whatever explanation he/she may give on the Invigilator Report Form. The Learner must be informed that this may be dealt with as a suspected breach of examination regulations and that a report will be passed to the Registrar.

The Learner may be instructed to continue with the remainder of his/her examinations. The incident must be handled in a confidential and discrete manner.

Actions for Conclusion of Examination

Conclusion of the examination: fifteen minutes and five minutes before the end of the exam, Invigilator shall announce 'fifteen minutes left' and 'five minutes left' to the candidates.

At the end of the examination, the Invigilator will announce:
'Time is up. Lay down the learner pens, and cease writing. Remain seated and do not talk. The learner examination script(s) will be collected and checked against the list. The learner may then collect the learner possessions and leave the room. There will be no talking until the learner have left the examination room'.

When collecting examination scripts Invigilators should ensure that Learners have filled out the front cover correctly and handed up any additional scripts or enclosures they received.

On completion of the examination, scripts will be put in order of the sign-in-sheet and should be delivered in person to the examinations centre. Each script is checked

against the sign-in sheet by a staff member from the Student Services office or by the Senior invigilator to ensure that all scripts have been delivered safely.

The Senior invigilator should ensure that scripts from other locations e.g rooms with students with accommodations have been incorporated into bundle prior to being signed in by staff from student services

Academic staff are requested to collect the completed examination scripts for their class within twenty four hours of completion of the examination. The faculty member will be requested to sign for the examination scripts at which point a check of the scripts will be completed by the examinations administrator and the faculty member.

Faculty are encouraged to have the relevant scripts corrected and second marked within eight (8) working days. In circumstances where Faculty are unable to comply with this request, a derogation may be applied by prior agreement with the Dean of School. The Dean of School will notify the Examinations Officer of such arrangements prior to the commencement of examinations.

Emergency Evacuation

In the event of an evacuation order, the Invigilator shall observe normal safety precautions and shall bring the examination group to a safe place having first instructed candidates that they must not discuss the examination.

Careful note should be taken of the time when the examination is interrupted. When the 'all clear' is given, the Invigilator shall bring the group back to the examination room to re-commence the examination and shall allow an appropriate amount of time to the candidates to complete it.

The Registrar, shall, however, have the right to recommend that the whole examination be cancelled, and that an alternative examination be held. Details of any such interruptions and recommendations must be included in the Invigilators Report Form.

Invigilator's Report Form

This form will be completed by the Invigilator and should include the following information:

- Basic Information - room, date, time etc.

- Number of Candidates

- Number of scripts distributed

- Number of scripts collected.

- Details of Learner behaviour - e.g. illness, cheating, leaving the room for medical reasons [time left and length of time away].

- Queries regarding the examination paper should be noted, which Learner noted the query and how it was handled.

- Any comments regarding examination registration.

The Invigilators Report Form is an Annex to this manual. The completed report, together with examination scripts, should be returned to the Examinations Office where they will be checked by a member of the Academic Affairs staff.

4.10.3. Assessment regulations for learners

Instructions to Candidates

Each Learner has a personal responsibility to make themselves familiar with the following regulations as they pertain to all examination sittings at the National College of Ireland.

Examination Regulations

The term "examination" in these Regulations should be construed to include reference, as appropriate, to written and oral examinations, assessment of programme work, project-work, etc., examination of theses, dissertations and similar work, an**d such other forms of assessment of candidates' performance as** may have been approved or prescribed by the College in relation to any programme of study or instruction, and cognate expressions should be construed accordingly.

A breach of examination and assessment regulations should be deemed to have occurred when any actual or attempted form of:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism, as defined in section 4.4 of this document
- Misrepresentation
- Bribery
- Falsification
- Impersonating or other such form of deception
- Possession of copies of examination question or examination paper, in advance of the examination being held
- Untrue claims to have carried out experiments / research

is perpetrated by a candidate whether acting alone or with any other person or persons.

Candidates should assemble 10 minutes before the advertised time of an examination but should not enter the examination room until requested to do so.

Smoking in the examination room is not permitted.

Except with prior approval of the Registrar, no eating or drinking is permitted in an examination room.

No candidate shall bring into the examination room or have in his/her possession while in the room, any materials other than those expressly permitted for that examination. Pencil cases are not permitted on desks.

Candidates should seat themselves at the desk indicated by their designated desk number as displayed on the notice board at the examination room entrance. They

should not move any of the papers on the desk or commence writing until requested to do so.

Candidates are asked to leave their Learner identity cards visible on their desks for the purpose of checking.

The Invigilator will advise all candidates on how to complete the cover sheet of the answer booklet and will indicate that their registration numbers and/or any other number should be used. Candidates are requested to read the instructions at the top of the examination paper before starting work.

Candidates must comply with an Invigilator's directions at all times.

Candidates may use slide rules, drawing instruments, dictionaries and other reference books/documents if expressly permitted. Mathematical tables, if required, will be supplied. Candidates may not bring their own mathematical tables or statistical tables into the examination room. If a candidate wishes to use anything other than that is expressly permitted for that examination, this must have been previously agreed with the Academic Affairs Office.

Silent non-programmable calculators may be used provided that the rules of any relevant external examining body do not specifically exclude them, module to any regulations that may be imposed. It is the responsibility of each Learner to ensure that his or her calculator is in working order. It is advisable to bring a spare battery. Candidates will not normally be permitted to borrow materials from another candidate.

Candidates shall not bring into the Examination room, nor have in their possession while in such examination room, any computing equipment, including electronic organisers and programmable calculators, mobile phones, recording equipment, radio, books, notes, paper or any source of information pertinent to the examination or which might influence examination performance. Retention of any unauthorised material shall be construed as a serious breach of Exam Regulations. The learner is reminded that severe sanctions are attached to any such breach of regulations under the Code of Discipline.

No candidate will be admitted to the examination room more than thirty minutes after the start of the examination; in exceptional circumstances, however (and provided that no other candidate has left the examination room) a candidate may be admitted later, at the discretion of the Invigilator. Extra time is not normally allowed.

If, after reading the examination paper, a candidate wishes to leave the examination room, he or she may not be allowed to do so until after thirty minutes from the start of the examination.

Candidates wishing to temporarily leave the examination room may not do so unless accompanied by a nominated attendant. In any event, no person may leave the **examination room without the Invigilator's permission and no candidate may leave** within the last thirty minutes of the examination period.

At the end of the examination candidates must remain in their place until an Invigilator has collected **their script(s). It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that** his/her script(s),answer sheets and unused answer books are handed to the Invigilator before leaving the examination hall.

If a candidate is absent from the examination for medical or other unavoidable reasons, a Medical Certification Personal Circumstances Form, Appendix 4 (AR3)

must be submitted to the learner Programme Coordinator without delay, together with a medical certificate if the absence was due to illness. Details of submission of this form are listed on the form. This form is an Appendix to this manual.

A candidate must not, on any pretext whatsoever speak to or have any communication with any other candidate; such communications will be regarded as a breach of the examination regulations. If candidates need to ask questions they should raise their hands and one of the invigilators will attend to them. Spare paper, etc. is to be obtained only from the Invigilator.

A candidate who is found to have unauthorised materials in her or his possession in the examination room shall be deemed to be in breach of the examination regulations. Books, notes, bags and coats must be left in the designated area.

Any written or printed materials not written on the official answer booklets or examination paper(s) shall be considered to be unauthorised materials. The unauthorised materials shall be removed and retained by the Invigilator. The same procedure will be followed where a candidate or candidates is or are considered by the Invigilator to have copied or attempted to copy another candidates answer(s) to an examination question(s).

In cases of impersonation, the impersonator and the personated shall be deemed to be in breach of the examination regulations.

If any candidate shall be adjudged to have violated any of the examination regulations, or in any other way acted improperly, the Academic Council will refer such matters to the Disciplinary Committee, as set out under the Code of Discipline (www.ncirl.ie).

An invigilator shall be empowered to inspect any material in the possession of a candidate during an examination.

Rough work should be included in the answer book and identified as such.

The candidate may NOT remove from the examination hall any items provided by the College other than the examination paper.

Examination Results: The official result of the learner examinations will be sent to the learner at the Address shown on our college records. The learner should ensure that the record is correct. Do not telephone the college as results will not be given over the telephone

4.11. Venue Management

- The Examinations Officer should ensure that venues used for assessment are fit for purpose.
- There should be sufficient space between desks to prevent the integrity of the assessment being called into question
- Where the venue is being used for accommodations for learners with a disability, the venue should be organised to ensure that screens or other such devices are in place should magnifying software be used

4.12. Exams and Assessment Policy for Learners with a Disability

National College of Ireland is committed to ensuring that Learners with a disability

are not disadvantaged in examinations. Special examination and/or assessment arrangements or accommodations may be made for Learners because of their temporary or permanent disability. These accommodations are intended to enable these Learners to perform to the best of their ability; they are not intended to give an unfair advantage to such candidates.

National College of Ireland has implemented the guidelines and policies as outlined in "Examination Arrangements for Learners with Disabilities – a guide for institutions of higher education" published by DAWN/AHEAD (available at www.ahead.ie). See appendix 4.7 for detailed guidance.

It is the policy of the College to facilitate by all appropriate means the participation of Learners with learning needs or disabilities in the programme offered by the College.

Learners who have a disability, and wish to apply for special arrangements for sitting assessments, must provide a copy of the Assessment Report upon which the request for accommodation is being made. This report shall be accompanied where possible by details of any special facilities that may have been provided for the Learner in State Examinations before entering the College.

Where a learning difficulty becomes apparent during a Learner's attendance at the College, the Learner shall be informed of the need for a medical/psychological assessment report to enable him/her to avail of any special arrangements.

It shall be the responsibility of the Learner to arrange for and produce such a report before the College provides any special examination arrangements.

Special arrangements that may be required at assessment times may include:

- The use of reader/writer
- Extra time allowance – including possible supervised rest breaks
- Tapes and transcripts of answers
- Additional equipment
- Alternative forms of assessment.

The existence of a Specific Learning Difficulty does not automatically entitle a Candidate to special assessment arrangements. Even though a person may have a Specific Learning Difficulty, he/she may not require the provision of special facilities – a decision can only be made on the basis of a medical/psychological assessment.

The College shall confirm with the Learner whether he/she has been given any special facilities in school for sitting examinations before entering the College. Previously agreed arrangements may be repeated.

In the event of no evidence being produced to indicate that an assessment has been previously carried out, then a medical/psychological assessment and report would need to be completed in order to assess the extent of the difficulty and to indicate the appropriate support required.

4.12.1. Application for Accommodations

Application must be made by the end of October in the case of programmes that take place during the traditional academic year. Dates will be published on the student portal and provided to learners registered with the Disability Support Service 4 weeks in advance of any deadline for programmes that fall out of this category.

4.13. Special Circumstances Relating to Assessment

4.13.1. Viva Voce Examination

The College shall have the right to assess any Candidate by a viva voce examination in addition to the normal assessment process as defined in the Programme and/or module assessment strategy. This decision may be made at a sitting of the Disciplinary Committee, Assessment Board or other academic committee of the College.

4.13.2. Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances must be brought to the attention of the relevant Dean of School at the earliest possible opportunity.

A candidate who is of the opinion that his/her performance in an examination or in other assessed work, or that his/her ability to attend an examination, or to comply with regulations governing a subject programme examination or course work, has been adversely affected, may refer to these circumstances to the appropriate Dean of School with a request that the circumstances be brought to the attention of the appropriate Board of Examiners. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to provide the Dean of School with any information concerning those personal circumstances that he/she believes may affect or have affected his/her performance and that he/she wishes the Board of Examiner to take into account. This information must be supplied within five working days after the date of the last examination or assessment submission date. Except in exceptional circumstances information of this nature shall not be considered if presented after the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

The request to the Dean of School shall be in writing and shall be delivered as soon as practicable, and in any event not later than five working days after formal examination or after the published date for submission of other forms of assessment.

The Candidate shall in the written request explain fully and clearly the circumstances and state in what way and between what dates they affected him/her.

The request shall be accompanied by relevant documentary evidence.

The Dean of School may seek such supplementary information as may be deemed appropriate from whatever source, to assist the Board of Examiners in its consideration of extenuating circumstances identified by the Candidate, and/or may interview the Candidate in order to allow him/her to clarify the request.

When a Board of Examiners makes any decision as to the final result of assessment affecting a Candidates progress, the Board of Examiners shall consider in accordance with these regulations and procedures any circumstances referred to it by the Dean of School.

4.13.3. Learners for whom English is not a first language (ENFL)

All examinations are conducted through the medium of English without reference to **Learners' first language.**

Use of Dictionaries

While evidence of English competence at admission is required, it is acknowledged that, in some circumstances, including the examination conditions, the use of ambiguous or less familiar terminology, words or phrases may cause ENFL learners additional anxiety. In order to remove potential disadvantage of this kind, it is appropriate to permit students to use an English word for word dictionary provided by the College. The dictionary used should not contain expanded definitions of words. The use of electronic dictionaries in examinations is not permitted.

Time Concessions

Authorised ENFL students should be permitted additional time to complete written examinations.

This will be 10 minutes extra time per examination hour. This means that all students with concessions (including for example students with dyslexia) will leave at the same time, making the system more manageable for invigilators.

Marking

While accepting that lecturers are responsible for maintaining standards and for ensuring equity in assessment, papers from authorised ENFL candidates will be identifiable and markers will be requested to adhere to the marking criteria for the assessment and not to penalise students purely for their poorer language skills so long as the concepts are correct. Clearly, if precise use of language is part of the assessment criteria for the module, this will not apply.

Eligibility

It is recommended that examination concessions only be extended to students who meet one of the criteria from Type 1 and the criterion in Type 2.

Type 1
Are citizens of and have come to NCI directly from a country where English is not the first language.

Are citizens of a country where English is not the first language and have come to NCI through an English Language School or Foundation / Bridging Course.

Are citizens of a country where English is not the first language and not have lived in an English speaking country for more than 5 years.

Are citizens of a country where English is not the first language and not have completed their last three years in secondary school in an English speaking country.

Type 2

Students can only qualify for examination concessions if they demonstrate that they are taking measures to improve their English by attending recognised English language courses. Documentation to show that students have registered for these English classes and / or the NCI English support scheme and have attended must be presented.

4.14. Correction and Grading of Assessment

4.14.1. Guidelines for the Recording of Marks on Exam Scripts

General Comments for the Benefit of Examiners

Examiners should evaluate the academic content of the examination material in an objective, transparent fashion based on the solutions and marking scheme provided to the external examiner.

Care should be taken to ensure that all the work of the Learner that is to be considered by the Examiner is evaluated using the appropriate guidelines for each school and that an accurate mark is returned.

It is expected that a Learner's language would convey meaning and the correct use of spelling and grammar should be considered in that context.

Specific Guidelines for Correction

Marks awarded must be in accordance with the marking scheme agreed with the external examiner. NO extrinsic considerations should influence an examiner in the award of marks. The examination board will consider documented extrinsic considerations raised by programme directors.

Care should be taken to scrutinise every page of each answer book as Learners sometimes leave blank pages between portions of their work, or do not begin their work on the first page of the answer book.

Examiners should ensure that when they read a page in the answer book that they mark each page with a tick or an initial to demonstrate that the page has been read.

Examiners should write the marks awarded for each portion of the Learners work in a colour other than that used by the Learner. The total mark awarded for the answer to a whole question should be given in bold clear figures beside the question number and ringed, i.e. on the page where the question starts.

Any comments made must relate strictly to the criteria for the assessment in the marking scheme. Comments that could be construed as being in any way personal or offensive must be avoided.

Where the Learner has answered one or more questions in excess of the number permitted he or she should indicate which question is cancelled. Examiners should mark only the required number of answers and if the excess questions are not cancelled the examiner should mark the questions in the order presented in the answer book until the required number of questions have been marked.

Where a Learner answers only the required number of answers but has cancelled any question or part of a question, examiners should ignore the cancelling and mark all the required number of answers including the cancelled one(s).

The total mark awarded for each numbered question should be entered in the question grid on the cover of the answer book.

In order to ensure that the total mark awarded to a candidate is correct, all marks should be double-checked. A suggested approach is to start at the front of the script and total up the marks. Record this total on the inside cover of the exam paper. Now repeat the process, this time starting at the last page of the answer book and working backwards. Record this mark on the inside of the answer book cover. Now check to make sure that the two totals agree. If they do not agree, all discrepancies must be rectified.

The total for the entire examination should be entered into a box underneath the **answers for each numbered question, with the word 'Total' to the left** of the mark.

All exam totals should be given in percentage format.

Results must be entered onto the marksheet by the lecturer. This can be done manually using the marksheet distributed by the Examinations Office or electronically directly into the QuercusPlus system.

The entry of results onto marksheets and QuercusPlus must be done with care and be crosschecked.

Scripts should be checked against the sign-in sheet for the exam.

Where a Learner is absent for the examination the lecturer should check this against the sign-in sheet.

Where a Learner is absent with permission from a continuous assessment, the total for the examination should also be given for the continuous assessment.

When a Learner achieves an overall result of 39% in a module, the lecturer should decide whether that Learner will be awarded 40% or not and make the change on the exam script or continuous assessment accordingly.

Second Marking

Second Marking – Policy

Purpose: The second marking policy has been introduced to ensure consistent marking standards are used. This is guided by European Standards & Guidelines on assessment and HETAC assessment & standards that assessment should Not rely on the judgement of single markers

Definitions

Blind Double Marking
Blind double marking means that separate copies of the assignment are marked independently and anonymously, or that the 1st marker makes no annotations on the work being marked so that the second marker examines all pieces of work. Both markers record their marks and comments separately and a final mark is determined.

Seen Double Marking by Retrospective Sampling

Double marking by sampling means that all assessments are marked by an internal examiner. A second marker then double marks a sample of the work already first marked, the sample being randomly selected from across the range of marks as follows:

Sampling options:

- A minimum of 3 assessments from each classification band and all fails or
- **FETAC sampling rules: $\sqrt{n}+ 1$ where n is the number of students. Minimum sample 12 or**
- The sample to be second marked must include written assessments and examinations scripts from the top, middle and bottom of the range of work.

Moderation

Moderation means that all assessment scripts whose primary purpose is summative are marked by an internal examiner. A second examiner who will have access to the grades and comments fo the 1st marker will moderate a sample of assessment to assure the quality of marking standards.

Sampling options

- A minimum of 5 assessments from each classification band and all fails or
- **FETAC sampling rules: $\sqrt{n}+ 1$ where n is the number of students. Minimum sample 12 or**
- The sample to be second marked must include written assessments and examinations scripts from the top, middle and bottom of the range of work.

Single Marking

Single marking is where assessment are marked by one examiner. This approach is used for formative assessment and for small parts of summative assessment.

Policy

1. Assessments on all Programmes from Level 4 on the National Framework of Qualifications and above are subject to the provisions of this policy.
2. The samples chosen randomly depending on the model of marking used
3. The models defined above should be used in the following circumstances
   a. Model 1: Blind Double Marking: Dissertations and Single assessments worth 10 credits or more
   b. Model 2: Seen Double Marking Retrospective Sampling: All other assessments work >=15% of the total mark
   c. Model 3: Moderation: This should be used in the case of large common modules e.g modules delivered off campus or common 1st year modules as an additional quality assurance mechanism.
   d. Model 4: Single Marking: Formative assessment and small individual assessments worth <15%. In cases where the assessment for the module is made up of several small assessments, at least 50% of assessments should be Seen Double marked using model 2

4. Once second marking is complete a discussion on the standards and grades will take place between the first and second marker.
6. This discussion may result in adjustments to overall marks e.g. is the boundary between pass and fail appropriate? Have we been too generous or not generous enough at the top end of the scales etc.
7. This discussion must take place against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria and the extent to which they have been achieved.
8. Second marking will <u>not</u> normally result in changes to individual scripts, but may result in changes to marks within bands, e.g. a decision that marks with the 50% to 60% band had been under or over marked by 5%. If this is the case, the entire set should be remarked.
9. Where there is a dispute between the 1st and 2nd marker, a 3rd marker will be asked to mediate. This may be the course director, subject head or Dean of School
10. A second marker may be recruited outside of the School or subject area in specialist subjects
11. The Registrar will work with colleagues in Schools and central services to develop processes by which second marking can be verified and recorded e.g. grades in a band may be adjusted upwards or downwards.
12. Second marking must take place before work is sent to external examiners. All assessments that count towards the final grade i.e. continuous assessment and examinations will be subject to second marking. The work that has been second marked will be sent to the external examiners.
13. The Internal Examiner shall make available to the External Examiner all scripts and continuous assessment material in accordance with dates determined by the Dean of School, together with the mark sheets that shall clearly show the marks allocated to each examination question, and the total mark for this subject computed and expressed as a percentage.

Exclusions from this policy

1. Tests corrected by online systems
2. MCQ tests

Second Marking **–** Procedure

- 1st and 2nd markers should be paired at the commencement of the semester and no later than week 3. This pairing takes place at School level.
- Where blind double marking is required, it is recommended that 2 copies of the assessment are submitted by the learner for that purpose. It is unlikely that a single examination script will be subject to blind double marking. As each is marked separately, there is no requirement to erase marks, comments etc.
- Where seen double marking is used, it is recommended that a different colour pen to the learner and 1st marker is used.
- You must ensure that you keep an accurate record of the marks being awarded to the sample by using the Double Marking Audit Sheet provided.
- The sample must be passed from the 1st marker to the 2nd marker as soon as it becomes available.
- The 2nd marker must note their marks on the Double Marking Audit Sheet.
- A discussion must take place between the 1st and 2nd markers in terms of agreeing the marks for the sample. If there is no material difference between the 1st and 2nd marker, the mark of the 1st marker should remain as the agreed mark. Any discussion should be regarding grade bands and not individual marks.
- The agreed marks may now be noted on the sample scripts.

- 1st and 2nd markers are required to sign both the Double Marking Audit Sheet and the marksheet attachment before submitting the scripts to the Examinations Office for external examining.

4.14.2. Guideline to Correcting

This guideline to correcting projects is to provide all faculty members with an overview of what is expected in the correction of assessment. Correcting is not an exact science and if in doubt it often helps to talk to a colleague and get a second opinion. Different modules lend themselves to different approaches in correcting.

The Learner must display:

- An ability to summarise and analyse key ideas or arguments in response to the assessment question.

- References to the appropriate programme reading and texts.

- An ability to illustrate key arguments and ideas by referring to their own experience.

4.14.3. HETAC Awards: Guidelines for Correction of Assessment

	Range and Accuracy of Knowledge	Structure and Focus	Quality of Argument and Expression
Distinction/1st Hons (70%+)	• Response demonstrates informed and secure understanding of the issue. • Response acknowledges complexity of the argument and reveals a very high standard of comprehension. • A range of reading and sources is evident.	• Response is exceptionally well formulated. • Structure is clear, coherent and develops the writer's argument. • Answer relates directly to the task and shows an appreciation of the wider implications/context.	• Writing is clear, fluent and accurate with an appropriate use of vocabulary and linguistic idiom. • Writing displays evidence of original thinking rather than merely replicating tutor's notes or paraphrasing other author's ideas. • Argument demonstrates conceptual command of the issue and displays a level of critical reflection
Merit 1 or 2.1 Hons (60-69.9%)	• Sound understanding of main issues demonstrated. • Knowledge is significant. • Answer is competent in the reproduction of received ideas. • There is evidence of good reading.	• While work displays an understanding of the question it may lack a sustained focus. • Structure is clear but may wane from question. • Answer relates directly to the task and shows and appreciation of the wider	• Writing is clear enough to convey the writer's meaning. • Writing displays evidence of original thinking rather than merely replicating tutor's notes. • Argument demonstrates conceptual command of the issue.

	Range and Accuracy of Knowledge	Structure and Focus	Quality of Argument and Expression
		implications/context.	
Merit 2 or 2.2 Hons (50-59.9%)	- Sound understanding of main issues demonstrated, but work is limited in terms of depth of analysis and findings. - Knowledge is significant. - Answer is competent in the reproduction of received ideas and in the demonstration of a critical viewpoint. - There is evidence of reading beyond class notes.	- While work displays an understanding of the question it may lack a sustained focus. - Answer may get a little side tracked and veer away from the central issue or task set. - Response deals effectively with the task set but may omit to place this in the wider context.	- Writing is clear enough to convey the writer's meaning. - Writing displays evidence of original thinking rather than merely replicating tutor's notes. - Argument demonstrates conceptual command of the issue.
Pass (40-49.9%	- Shows sufficient knowledge to frame a basis answer to the question. - Shows a basic understanding and awareness of the relevant concepts and practice. - Misses some points of information and may not answer the question directly.	- Writing is indiscriminately around the subject without showing real understanding of the question. - Structure of answer is underdeveloped.	- Argument is incomplete and poorly organised. - Writing is generally grammatically correct but does not use extensive or sophisticated vocabulary. - Little originality is shown. Work is limited in terms of depth of analysis.
FAIL (0-39%)	Essentially, the work is severely lacking in a number of ways, as there is an inadequate		

	Range and Accuracy of Knowledge	Structure and Focus	Quality of Argument and Expression
	coverage of objectives. The work is likely to have errors or go off in a tangent at times and overall the material presented tends to be overly descriptive rather than evaluative. The material presented shows little relevance and may fail to deal with the theoretical elements of the programme. It may be suggestive that the Learner concerned needs to understand more clearly how to write and to develop more appropriate techniques for project preparation.		

Note: These grade bands apply to HETAC awards only.

The following table outlines criteria to be used for Levels 1-6 (FETAC) programmes

4.14.4. Grading Criteria for Awards at level 1 - level 3

	Successful		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Grading Criteria	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a structured and supported learning setting. The outcomes have been achieved with significant support and direction from the assessor, but the learner has demonstrated subtantative achievement on their own.	The learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award in a structured and supported setting with clear direction from the assessor. The learner has demonstrated some autonomy of action and has taken limited responsibility for the activities and for generating evidence.	The Learner has achieved the learning outcomes for the award with some supervision and direction. The learner has demonstrated autonomy of action and has taken responsibility for generating appropriate evidence.

NOTE: Levels 1 and 2 are not delivered by NCI

Grading Criteria for awards at Level 4 – Level 6

Pass	Merit	Distinction
A Pass indicates that the learner has: achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a pass is the minimum acceptable standard used the language of the vocational/specialised area competently attempted to apply the theory and concepts appropriately provided sufficient evidence which has relevance and clarity.	A Merit indicates that the learner has: achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a merit implies a good standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area with a degree of fluency expressed and developed ideas clearly demonstrated initiative, evaluation and analytical skills presented coherent and comprehensive evidence.	A Distinction indicates that the learner has: achieved the learning outcomes as outlined in the minor award - a distinction implies that an excellent standard has been achieved used the language of the vocational/specialised area fluently and confidently demonstration-depth understanding of the subject matter demonstrated a high level of initiative, evaluation skills demonstrated analytical and reflective thinking expressed and developed ideas clearly, systematically and comprehensively presented coherent, detailed and focused evidence

	FAIL 0 – 39%	PASS 40 – 59%		Second Class Honours 60 – 69%	1st Class Honours 70% +
Dissertation Objectives: definition and attainment	Objectives are inadequately specified	Objectives may be specified but not achieved.	Objectives have been clearly specified and achieved to some extent.	Objectives have been clearly specified and are appropriate. The objectives have been fully achieved.	Objectives have been clearly specified and are creative and appropriate. Objectives have been fully achieved or surpassed
Use of and critical understanding of relevant theory	Very limited use of theory and concepts	Limited use of theory and concepts	Reasonable use of theory and concepts but lack of breadth in literature reviewed.	Comprehensive use of relevant theory and concepts. Evidence of breadth in literature review.	Critical application and critique of relevant theory and concepts. Evidence of breadth and depth of literature reviewed.
Relevance and justification of methodology utilised and the ability to carry out the specified methodology	Alternative methodologies not considered and method selected not justified. Significant errors in the application of methodology.	Alternative methodologies have not been considered and only limited justification for selected methods. Some errors in application.	Alternative methodologies have not been fully considered, though a reasonable attempt made at justifying the selected methodology. The methodology has been completely carried out.	Alternative methodologies have been considered and the methodology selected has been justified and critiqued. The methodology has been competently carried out.	Alternative methodologies have been fully considered and the chosen methodology fully justified. The application has been rigorously carried out.
Analysis of the research findings and ability to understand the study's	Pedestrian or poor attempt to analyse the findings.	Some attempt at analysis although with some problems.	A reasonable attempt has been made to analyse the findings.	Rigorous analysis of findings. Demonstrates the ability to synthesise data collected and relevant	Rigorous and creative analysis of findings. Demonstrated the ability to synthesise data

	FAIL 0 – 39%	PASS 40 – 59%		Second Class Honours 60 – 69%	1st Class Honours 70% +
implications and limitations	Implications and limitations not understood.	Implications and limitations not well understood.	However, the synthesis of data collected and relevant theory is not fully achieved. Implications and limitations not fully appreciated.	theory. Shows an understanding of the limitations and implications of the study.	collected and relevant theory. Insightful conclusions which appreciate limitations and implications of the study.
Quality of Presentation – including referencing and structure	Poor presentation with inconsistent referencing	Reasonable presentation but inconsistent in referencing	Satisfactory presentation with consistent referencing and clear structure	Good presentation and structure with rigorous referencing	Excellent presentation and structure with rigorous referencing.

4.15. Submission and verification of Subject Marks

Final agreed assessment marks should be entered by the Internal Examiner to the College MIS system (QuercusPlus) within 2 weeks of correction and, in the case of terminal examinations, at least two weeks in advance of the appropriate meetings for the examinations board. Normally, a "Mark Sheet" should be completed in respect of each Examination Subject, and signed by both Internal examiner, Second Marker and External Examiners.

The External Examiner(s) should certify the agreed final marks for each candidate on the "Mark Sheet". The completed "Mark Sheet" should include the following for each candidate:

The allocation of marks for Written, Oral, Practical, Projects, Continuous Assessment etc., in accordance with the terms of the Approved Programme Schedule currently in operation;

The overall total of marks awarded to each candidate and agreed upon by the Internal and External Examiners for that Examination Subject.

4.15.1. Internal verification process (FETAC/CIPD awards)

The internal verifier should not be an internal examiner on the programme being assessed. The internal verifier should be a full time member of NCI staff and based in a School.

The internal verifier will check adherence to **NCI's quality assured assessment** procedures; this will be carried out by verifying that:

- **NCI's assessment policies and procedures are implemented across all** programmes
- learner evidence matches the assessment requirements of the award standard by confirming assessment techniques used are appropriate
- learner evidence has been generated as agreed within the validated programme
- information on assessment was provided to learners i.e. submission dates, guidelines/briefs, assessment criteria
- appropriate documentation was issued to learners
- appropriate documentation was used to record learner results
- For all learners requesting certification the examinations office will:
- obtain a provisional results report(s) for the learner group(s) (the FETAC online web entry system may be used to generate this report)
- confirm results are recorded for all learners being entered on the report
- confirm evidence is available for all learner results recorded
- If learner results or evidence is missing; corrective action will need to be taken eg contact internal examiner, recheck all assessments and evidence for mislaid items. Check sign in and assessment receipt books to ensure assessment was received.

On a sample of learners the internal verifier will:

- check marks are totalled and percentage marks calculated correctly

- check marks are transferred correctly from learner evidence to learner marking sheet/record

  - check percentage marks and grades allocated are consistent with FETAC grading bands

  - note errors and record corrections made

  - identify any irregularities, notify appropriate staff and take corrective action if required as per agreed procedures

  - complete an internal verification report

4.16. Assessment Boards (Results approval panel)

4.16.1. Preparing for Assessment Boards

The examinations officer will run the overall programme calculator 3 days prior to the examination board and produce the programme broadsheet

The Programme Director will review the broadsheet. In reviewing the broadsheet, the Programme Director will examine the following
- Absence by cross checking with sign in sheets
- Borderline cases
- Deferred students
- Manually calculate an overall result for a sample group
- The signed off broadsheet should be returned to the Examinations Office by noon of the working day preceding the internal examinations board. Any anomalies should be highlighted to the Examinations Officer. If a Programme Director is not available to sign off a broadsheet, the Dean of School takes on this responsibility

The Programme Director is required to review and signoff the HETAC/FETAC broadsheet by noon of the working day preceding the HETAC/FETAC assessment board.

4.16.2. Meeting of Assessment Board

The Internal and External Examiners shall meet together as an Assessment Board under the chairmanship of the Vice/President. Only those Internal Examiners who have participated in the examinations for a given award (or examination stage leading to an award), together with the Dean of School concerned shall participate at the examinations board at which recommendations in relation to that award or examination stage are decided.

A set of assessment results for a programme may not be considered unless a quorum for that programme exists as follows:

The number of((credits for the programme/10)/2) + 1
(this assumes a predominance of 10 credit modules)

- Programmes of 90 credit   : - 5 internal examiners

- Programmes of 120 credits   7 internal examiners
- Programmes of greater than 120 credits: 13 internal examiners

Where an award is being made, the external examiner for the programme must attend or (having visited the College and made comments/recommendations and reported) be represented by an individual independent to the College

The Director of Student Services and his/her staff as appropriate may also attend the Board but shall not participate in the decision of the board.

All decisions of the assessment boards, internal and external, shall be made by majority decision of the Examiners present (by voting if necessary). In the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson of the assessment board shall exercise a casting vote.

The proceedings and deliberations of the examinations board are strictly confidential. Under no circumstances should any person attending an examination board disclose to any other person a decision of the Board or any document, information or opinion considered, conveyed or expressed at the meeting.

4.16.3. Broadsheets of Results

At the assessment board meeting, broadsheets of results shall be endorsed and these shall record the total marks awarded to each candidate in each assessment module and which shall indicate, in relation to each candidate's overall result according to the grading criteria of the award. Other results available are:

General Overall Results (HETAC awards)

ABS   Absent from Examination Counted as an Attempt
DEF   Deferral of Result(s)
EXE   Exemption(s)
FAIL   Fail
NR   Not Recorded
NREC   Not Recommended – Research Degree only
WDRW   Withdrawn
WHLD   Withheld

General Overall Results (FETAC awards)

Referred   Learner has not met minimum standards

In the event of disagreement between Examiners with regard to the mark which should be awarded to a candidate in any assessed module, which has not have resolved between them prior to the meeting of the examination board, an Examiner who continues to dissent at the meeting, may choose to have a dissenting opinion recorded on the Broadsheet of Results.

Any dissenting opinion by an Examiner which shall have been recorded upon the Broadsheet of Results shall be brought to the attention of the Registrar, Academic Council and or the relevant validating authority. The decision of the Awarding Body

in relation thereto will be final.

4.16.4. Decisions of the Assessment Board

Pass by Compensation

Grades which are greater than or equal to 35% but less than 40% are awarded when a learner has nearly (but not quite) demonstrated attainment of the relevant minimum intended learning outcomes for a particular assessment task.

Performance at the first attempt in modules in a given stage (of at least 30 credits) may be used to compensate in the same stage provided no module in the stage has been failed outright. A pass earned in this way is referred to as a pass by compensation and is credit bearing.
Where a candidate is just below pass in each of a string of independent modules in the same stage the results are reinforced. Consequently, it is justifiable to limit the number of independent modules that may be passed by compensation in a stage.

Because modules can have different sizes it is reasonable to express such a limit as a proportion of the total available credit rather than the number of modules. This latter point assumes that the confidence in the grade is increased in larger volume modules owing to compensation processes operating within the module.

In a programme based on stages, subject to conditions (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) specified below, a module can be passed by compensation (using passes in other modules from the same stage) unless specifically precluded in the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule.

Compensation can be applied automatically. Accordingly the programme and module assessment strategies should take this into account and ensure that compensation is consistent with the requirement that minimum intended programme learning are achieved before an award is recommended.
Certain modules may be designated as not passable by compensation in the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule.
Compensation can only be applied if:
  i.   learner has been assessed for all stage modules and no module in the stage has been failed outright ie below 35%);

  ii. the results of all modules in the stage are from first attempts;

  iii. in the case of fulltime learners, the results are from the same sitting (session); and

  iv. the stage aggregate of credit weighted excesses of Percentage marks (over 40) is greater than or equal to twice the stage aggregate of credit weighted deficits of marks (under 40) and the potentially compensatable results account for no more than one third of the credit for the stage: i.e. 20 credits in a 60 credit stage or 10 credits in a 30 credit stage.

  v.   Compensation may be applied only to enable a learner to pass a stage (at the award stage a learner who passes by compensation remains eligible for honours etc.). Compensation does not change the result of the modules passed in that way. When reporting module passes by compensation (on the Europass Diploma Supplement), the actual result is returned, e.g. 37%, along with an indication that the module pass has been granted by compensation.

Transcripts

A transcript of results (marks) combining both semesters will be made available to the learner in June following the Assessment Board. If the learner is in this category, the learner overall grade at the bottom of this transcript will indicate if the Examination Board has decided the learner will pass by compensation.

It is indicated on the learner Semester One transcript if any failed results are currently in pass by compensation range.

Exemptions

Subject to normal programme update and modification via periodic programme evaluations or otherwise, modules passed shall accrue for the purposes of award and need not be retaken. This shall not apply in respect of any sub-unit of an examination module e.g. in respect of a component module within an examination module.

The passing of a module at any examination is governed by the right of National College of Ireland to admit or re-admit Learners to its examinations or to present or re-present such Learners for the purpose of awards.

Additional Exemptions

Additional exemptions may be granted to a candidate in respect of additional Examination Subjects passed by virtue of further attempts at the examination. In order to complete the examination stage concerned, the candidate must obtain a clear pass in all required Examination Subjects.

In recording exemptions on the Broadsheet of Results, in respect of attempts subsequent to a candidate's first attempt at the examination, only the additional exemptions gained should be recorded in the overall result column: exemptions awarded by virtue of previous attempts should not be repeated in the overall result column on a current Broadsheet. They should however be recorded in the module mark column(s) as "X".

Waiver of Exemptions

A candidate who has presented for an examination as a full-time candidate, and has been granted exemptions on that basis, will be deemed to be a full-time candidate until the candidate has completed that examination stage. The candidate's results will meanwhile be determined in accordance with the regulations for full-time candidates. Such a candidate, however, may, at any time waive the exemptions and opt to present as a part-time candidate for subsequent attempts, in which case the candidate's subsequent results will be considered and determined as those of a part-time candidate.

4.16.5. Granting of Awards

Exemption for the purpose of this paragraph means exemption from parts of a programme; note that the term exemption is also sometimes used in a different sense to indicate satisfactory completion of a module.

Exemption procedures must be consistent with the necessity for learners to demonstrate the learning outcomes required to qualify for an award. Exemption allows those learning outcomes to be achieved and/or demonstrated in alternative ways and recognises that they may have been achieved prior to enrolment in the programme.

In principle, exemptions are permitted at any stage of a programme

subject to the relevant programme and constituent module assessment strategies.

Where the result of the module is required for calculation of an award classification the programme committee should, where feasible, establish a fair, **consistent and transparent process for grading the learner's achi**evements in **respect of the exempted module's learning outcomes. Where this is not possible,** the award can only be recommended without classification.

Recognition of prior learning– uncertified learning

A learner may be exempted from having to participate in a module if he/she has already attained the minimum intended module learning outcomes. The demonstrable prior learning should be a sufficiently good match to the minimum intended module learning outcomes to justify exemption from the module in the context of the overall programme.

In the particular case where the relevant prior learning is uncertified (e.g. prior experiential learning) the programme committee should assess the learner by the regular module assessment instruments and/or by an alternative assessment arrangement. This process will be clearly documented in the programme and module assessment strategy. Learners who are assessed to have demonstrated the required learning are granted the available credit for the module and are exempt from the module. Furthermore, a grade (percentage mark or alphabetic grade) should be available in principle but providers may choose not to grade if the assessment arrangement might not provide grading consistency with the regular assessment instruments.

If the module is one which contributes to the award classification, it must be graded in order for the award to be classified, otherwise, an unclassified award should be made.

Modules that do not contribute to the award classification do not need to be graded.

When a grade is not assigned the result for learners who demonstrate the required **learning should be returned as 'Exemption Granted'. Where a grade is awarded it can** be used in compensation etc., as with any regularly passed module.

Where grading is infeasible there are foreseeable circumstances where a learner might be advantaged by waiving a right to exemption to enable award classification. The provider should foresee/provide for such situations and ensure that learners are aware of any such consequences.

Recognition of prior learning– certified learning

There are two scenarios of prior certified learning:

Scenario 1

In this scenario the learning is certified by an awarding body in the form of a major award (for example a higher certificate or bachelor degree) or is included as part of such an award.

Subject to the Sectoral Convention 5, an exemption may be granted for a module if the minimum intended module learning outcomes can be demonstrated by the learner. The result for learners who demonstrate the required learning should be **returned as 'Exemption Granted'. The learner should not be granted any ECTS credit** because credit has already been granted in the prior qualification.

If the module is one which would normally contribute to the award classification,

such exemption should only entitle a learner to an unclassified award unless it is feasible to recognise or award a grade. Any grade awarded/recognised should be consistent with the prior award classification and the module grades in the associated Europass Diploma Supplement.

Scenario 2 In this case the learning is certified by an awarding body in the form of a minor, special purpose or supplemental award or it is certified in respect of a period of study and[24] the relevant credit has not already been used to meet the credit requirements for a major award.

This case of prior certified learning can be handled in the same way as prior uncertified learning with the exception that the provider should not require the learner to undergo assessment provided the attainment of the minimum intended module learning outcomes can be demonstrated. However, where there is a need for a grade to be assigned, for example, where it contributes to an award classification, then assessment may be necessary. The learner may transfer his/her credit. A grade is available in principle but providers may choose not to grade if consistency with the grading in regular assessment instruments cannot be assured.

The result for learners who demonstrate the required learning but are not graded **should be returned as 'Exemption Granted'.**

HETAC awards

Criteria for Award of Higher Certificates (Level 6) /Ordinary Degrees (Level 7)

Awards at Higher Certificate and Higher Diploma levels may be made at Pass, Merit 1, Merit 2 or Distinction classification.

To be eligible for such an award at Pass classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations.

To be eligible for consideration for an award at Merit or Distinction classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Achieve a pass in all the required Examination Subjects at the final examination
  and
- Obtain an average mark as follows at the final examination.

Average Mark

Merit 2 at least 50% of the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule. Merit 1 at least 60 % of the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule. Distinction at least 70% of the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule.

An Award of Merit 2, Merit 1 or Distinction classification may not be considered unless the candidate has passed the final examination:

- In the case of full-time candidates, at the first attempt,
  or
- In the case of part-time candidates, by virtue of passing in each required examination module at the first attempt.

No module thresholds shall apply to eligibility for awards at Distinction and Merit classifications other than the candidate must achieve a pass in each required examination module. A pass by compensation will suffice for this purpose.

Passes, Merits and Distinctions will be awarded on the results of the final year examination only. In NCI there are programmes where the total average sum is calculated over the final 2 years of the programme. Such an example is the BA in Human Resource Management.

Criteria for Award of Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma (Level 8)

The award of a Bachelor Degree/Higher Diploma may be made at Pass or Honours classifications (First Class Honours, Second Class Honours, Grade 1, and Second Class Honours, Grade 2).
In order to be eligible for consideration for the award of a Bachelor Degree at Pass Classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme approval schedule.

To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Bachelor Degree at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations
  and
- Obtain, at the final examination, an average mark (based on the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule), as follows:

Average Mark

Second Class Honours, Grade 2 at least 50%
Second Class Honours, Grade 1 at least 60%
First Class Honours at least 70%

An Award with Honours may not be considered unless the candidate has passed the final examination:

- In the case of full-time candidates, at the first attempt
  or
- In the case of part-time candidates, by virtue of passing in each required examination module at the first attempt. In such cases the Examination Subject marks/grades to be included in the average result shall be those obtained at the candidate's first attempt at the respective Examination Subjects.

Normally, Pass or Honours for a Bachelor Degree will be awarded on the results of the final year examinations only but contributions from other sources will be acceptable in accordance with the approved programme schedule, e.g. where a spectrum of skills indicate the worthiness of the candidate for the award and where these skills can only be acquired over time.

To achieve the learner award, the total average sum of all modules taken in the final stage is the overall mark achieved by the Learner.

Criteria for Award of Taught Masters Programmes (Level 9)

The award of a Masters Degree may be made at Pass or Honours classification (First Class Honours, Second Class Honours).

In order to be eligible for consideration for the award of a Masters Degree at Pass classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations
  And

- Obtain, at the final examination, an average mark (based on the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule), as follows:

  Average Mark between 40%-59%

To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Masters Degree at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination (including dissertation if required) as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations
  and
- Obtain, at the final examination, an average mark (based on the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule), as follows:

  Second Class Honours at least 60%
  First Class Honours at least 70%

An Award with Honours may not be considered unless the candidate has passed the final examination:

- In the case of full-time candidates, at the first attempt
  or
- In the case of part-time candidates, by virtue of passing in each required examination at the first attempt. In such cases the Examination Subject marks/grades to be included in the average result shall be those obtained at the candidate's first attempt at the respective Examination Subjects.

Criteria for Award of Postgraduate Diploma (Level 9)

The award of Post Graduate Diploma may be made at Pass, Merit or Distinction

In order to be eligible for consideration for the award of a Post Graduate Diploma at Pass Classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations

To be eligible for consideration for the award of a Post-Graduate Diploma at Honours classification, a candidate must:

- Satisfy all the examination and other requirements set for the programme
  and
- Pass the final examination as a whole in accordance with the Programme Regulations
  and
- Obtain, at the final examination, an average mark (based on the total marks available as specified in the Approved Programme Schedule), as follows:

Average Mark

Pass   at least   40%
Merit   at least   60%
Distinction   at least   70%

An Award with Merit or Distinction may not be considered unless the candidate has passed the final examination:

- The case of full-time candidates, at the first attempt
  or
- In the case of part-time candidates, by virtue of passing in each required examination module at the first attempt. In such cases the Examination Subject marks/grades to be included in the average result shall be those obtained at the **candidate's first attempt at the respective Examination Subjects.**

Criteria for Award of Minor, Special Purpose and Supplemental Awards

Minor awards, and supplemental awards shall be unclassified.

Special purpose awards which have a volume of at least 60 credits and are comparable to a major award (at the same NFQ level) may be classified in accordance with the convention for relevant major award otherwise awards of this type shall be unclassified.

FETAC awards

FETAC Awards at Level 3 or below are awarded as Successful
FETAC Awards at level 4-6 are awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction

PASS   50-64%

MERIT   65-79%
DISTINCTION   80-100%

ICM awards

CIPD awards

4.16.6. Repeat for Honours

A learner who has repeated a module may not gain an honours or distinction /merit award. This 'repeat for honours' rule applies only to the final 60 credits of the award. Therefore in the case where the overall average is determined by a % of previous years overall averages or best modules etc, it is acceptable to allow the learner to repeat modules in the 1st to penultimate years and to take the best result (ie the learner is not capped to the 1st sitting mark)

Learners who gain full stage exemption from stages that are used to calculate the award classification will have their award classification calculated on the basis of stages completed at NCI.

4.16.7. Borderline Cases

Examination board meetings should allow for discretion in full and frank discussion of all borderline cases before a final decision is made. That final decision should be based on the cumulative evidence presented rather than on the view of one Internal or External Examiner.

Guidelines for awarding under preponderance

Where a learner's overall average mark for the purpose of calculation of an award lies at a borderline, the rule of preponderance should be used. The preponderance rule should be used for all marks within 1 % of the grade eg 69% in the case of 1st Class honours. Ie a learner reaching 69.5% will not automatically be uplifted unless more than half of the modules giving credit for the award stage have 1st Class honours marks.

The Broadsheet(s) of Results shall be signed by the Chairperson (President) and Secretary (Registrar) of the meeting, and by all of the Examiners (External and Internal) present at the meeting. The Broadsheet(s) of Results must be lodged immediately in the Registrar's Office. The Registrar will forward all Broadsheets of Results to the Academic Council and or the Validating Authority for ratification.

4.17. Progression Eligibility

Learners are required to pass all modules identified as essential prerequisites for progression (as specified by the programme assessment strategy and approved programme schedule) before progressing to the next stage. The presumption here is that the stages are substantial e.g. 30 or more credits and that the programme is for a major award.

Learners may be permitted, on a case by case basis and under exceptional circumstances, to carry a failed module while progressing to the next stage, provided the module is not a prerequisite for any module in this stage and provided it is consistent with the requirements of the relevant programme assessment strategy.

Normally, learners are required to pass a carried module in the stage into which it is carried.

As a general guideline the normal maximum missing credit should be 16% of the credit for the stage
e.g. 10 credits per 60 credit stage.

The decision to allow a learner to progress whilst carrying modules will be made by the assessment board on recommendation of the Programme Director.

4.18. Communication of Results

4.18.1. Provisional Entries

All results received by Learners prior to the ratification by the external exam board will be considered as provisional results. Only on completion of the external exam board process can exam results be confirmed as not provisional.

Entries by candidates who have not complied with all appropriate College procedures and requirements such as registration, payment of fees, disciplinary issues concerning the college residence and the College itself, etc will be regarded as provisional.

Any recommendations by the examinations board in respect of the result of any such candidate will be regarded as provisional until such time as the candidate has complied with the appropriate requirements and in consequence, results for such candidates will be withheld and WHLD will be noted on the broadsheet. The college shall not allow an award to be granted to any candidate whose results are deemed provisional.

4.19. Procedures for dealing with breaches of examination regulations

4.19.1. Code of Discipline

As members of the College community, Learners have an obligation to know and abide by, in addition to the laws of the state, all College policies and procedures, including the College Code of Discipline. In this regard, the College has developed relevant policies and regulations statements designed to offer all Learners a friendly and safe environment. In general, the College expects that the common sense of a mature and responsible individual will determine if the behaviour is one that should be avoided and may be adjudicated. The provisions of the Code of Discipline continue to apply when a Learner is outside the campus on an academic exercise or representing the College in any way. Learners should be aware that they are viewed by the public as representatives of the College and they are expected to behave in a manner that reflects positively on themselves and the College.

Any breach by a Candidate of these regulations;

During the examination shall be documented by the Invigilator and reported to the Examinations Office. The Candidate shall be notified to this effect by the Invigilator.

Which is discovered during the marking of the examination, shall be documented by the lecturer and reported to the Dean of School.

4.20.   Plagiarism – Code of Practice for Dealing with Plagiarism

4.20.1. Principles

Plagiarism arises when extracts from **someone else's work are used without** acknowledgement, i.e. in the case of written work , not italicised, not set in quotation marks and not referenced. This is not limited to text but can also include graphics, tables, photographs, video, music and computer code. Plagiarism is also submitting the same piece of work for assessment under multiple modules;

Plagiarism is not an acceptable practice and will cause a piece of work to be penalised or regarded as null.

The submission of plagiarised materials for assessment purposes is fraudulent and all suspected cases will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the College following the procedures outlined here and with reference to the Code of Discipline

If perpetrated on a substantial scale, especially with intention, disqualification from an examination or award may occur.

All work submitted by students for assessment purposes is accepted on the understanding that it is their own work and written in their own words except where explicitly referenced using the accepted norms and formats of the appropriate **academic discipline. NCI's house style of referencing is the Harvard Style**

 Whilst some cases of plagiarism can arise through poor academic practice with no deliberate intent to cheat, this still constitutes a breach of acceptable practice, and requires to be appropriately investigated, and acted upon.

Regulations, guidelines and procedures regarding plagiarism should be made widely available and included in programme handbooks, websites, school noticeboards or appropriate handouts to learners.

Plagiarism can arise through ignorance and therefore it is important to ensure that learners understand what is meant by the term and the seriousness of the offence. This should be reinforced by faculty when distributing assessment briefs.

Learners are required to sign a short declaration that work submitted by them for assessment purposes is their own. This statement should be attached to a submitted piece of coursework, essay or dissertation and should also require acknowledgment that the learner has read and understood the plagiarism regulations.

Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) has been introduced to assist learners in tracking poor academic practice.

Cases in which students knowingly permit others to copy their work shall also be subject to the procedures outlined here and considered an offence.

4.20.2. Plagiarism Committee

The Plagiarism Committee has responsibility for dealing with suspected and reported cases of plagiarism. The Committee is a College committee and will meet in November, January, March and May.

The Committee will be comprised of a
- member of faculty from each School,
- the Director of Centre for Innovation in Learning & Teaching (Chair)
- a representative from the Learning Support Team.
- Administrative support will be provided by the registrar, Exams Office and CRILT.

A Dean of School will not sit on this Committee.
Members of this Committee may not sit on the Disciplinary Committee where the Disciplinary Committee is considering cases referred to it by the Plagiarism Committee

The Committee will be appointed annually by Academic Council at the last meeting of the preceding Academic Year.

Members of the Committee will be facilitated to attend training an professional development workshops which deal with plagiarism, academic integrity, scholarship and writing and academic assessment issues, be made aware of current best practice guidelines, techniques for minimising, detecting and responding to plagiarism, and current national and international developments across the HE sector.

4.20.3. Procedures

Where a member of the teaching staff detects a suspected instance of **plagiarism in a student's assignment or** examination and where the specific context and nature of the case indicates poor academic practice at the early stage of a Course or Module rather than deliberate intent to cheat, any of the following courses of action may be followed:

Discuss directly with the student and provide advice about correct citation and how to avoid plagiarism in the future. The student may be required to resubmit the work without any further penalty;

or

Refer the alleged instance to the Plagiarism Committee.

In all other circumstances a member of teaching staff who suspects that a submitted piece of student work may be plagiarised should notify the Registrar who will refer the matter to the Plagiarism Committee. A short report including a copy of the suspected example and any evidence for plagiarism should be forwarded to the Committee via the Registrar.

The Committee shall consider the evidence and conduct an investigation of the alleged plagiarism and make a determination based on one of four possible outcomes:
> This is a Serious Case of Plagiarism
> This is a Case of Plagiarism
> This is a Minor Case of Plagiarism
> This is not a Case of Plagiarism

The committee may make a determination on the basis of the evidence before it or may seek further evidence including calling the student to appear before at least two members of the committee.
A student has the right to appeal a decision of the Plagiarism Committee – in the event of such an appeal a student may be invited to appear before the committee and/or to submit further evidence to refute the finding. The Plagiarism Committee may change its finding to any other finding or uphold **it's the original finding based on the appeal.**
Following this, where a student wishes to appeal further, the case will be referred to an Appeals Committee which will follow the appeals procedures of the Disciplinary Committee.

4.20.4. Serious Case of Plagiarism

Criteria:
A first offence when the assignment is completely, or where a large portion of it is plagiarised, or a second offence (of whatever degree) committed on the same or on a different module.
Outcome:
(i)   All cases of Serious Plagiarism will be referred to the College's Disciplinary Committee. The student will be notified of this decision and invited to appear before the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
(ii)   The assessment results will be withheld pending the outcome of the Disciplinary process.
(iii)   The member of the teaching staff who referred the case will be informed of this decision.

4.20.5. Case of Plagiarism

Criteria:
A first offence where the plagiarised passage or passages make a significant contribution to the achievement of the assignment.
Outcome:

(i)   The student will be notified of the determination and issued with a written warning indicating that any future offence will be deemed a Serious Case of Plagiarism and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

(ii)   The assessment results will be withheld pending the completion of an additional assignment set by the Plagiarism Committee on the topic of academic integrity, referencing and scholarly writing. This assignment must be completed by the student and submitted to the Chairman of the Plagiarism Committee – results will be withheld until satisfactory completion of this additional assignment.

(iii) A record of this finding will be held in student records for the duration of the course and deleted upon completion of the course.

(iv)   The member of the teaching staff who referred the case will be informed of this decision and will be provided with guidance from the committee indicating that he/she should determine a mark/grade of the submission based only on those sections of the submission deemed not to have been plagiarised. **The student's mark for the** plagiarised assignment shall be capped at a maximum of 40% or at the relevant threshold pass mark for the course if it is other than 40%.

4.20.6. Minor Case of Plagiarism

Criteria:
A first offence where the plagiarised passage or passages make only a slight contribution to the achievement of the assignment.

Outcome:
(i)   The student will be notified of the determination and issued with a written warning indicating that any future offence will be deemed a Serious Case of Plagiarism and will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

(ii)   The student will be provided with advice on where to obtain support for academic referencing and scholarly writing.

(iii) A record of this finding will be held in student records for 12 months from the date of submission of the assignment and deleted upon completion of the course.

(iv)   The member of the teaching staff who referred the case will be informed of this decision and will be provided with guidance from the committee indicating that he/she should determine a mark/grade of the submission based only on those sections of the submission deemed not to have been plagiarised. The appropriate course director shall also be informed.

4.20.7. Not a Case of Plagiarism

Criteria:
There is insufficient evidence of plagiarism.

Outcome:
(i)   The student will be notified of the determination.

(ii)   The student may be offered advice on where to obtain support for academic referencing and scholarly writing.

(iii) The member of the teaching staff who referred the case will be informed of this decision and will be provided with guidance from the committee indicating that he/she should determine a mark/grade of the submission based on the original submission.

An appropriate record should be kept in respect of any upheld allegation, which can be consulted by the Plagiarism Committee to determine whether a new case is potentially a second, or subsequent, offence.

Statistical information covering the number of cases referred to the Committee, the number of written warnings and other penalties applied and their distribution across Schools, should be collated by the Quality Assurance & Statistical Services Office to inform subsequent modifications to these regulations and ascertain the requirement for wider training and information dissemination on this topic.

4.21. Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee is appointed by the Academic Council and shall be constituted as follows:

Registrar or Nominee of the President
Three members of the Academic Council
At least one member of faculty who does not sit on Academic Council
One Learner representative who sits on the Academic Council
Recording Secretary

Four members shall constitute a quorum.

The Registrar may nominate an alternative in the event of her/his unavailability. The Learner Body may nominate one alternative member and the Academic Council may nominate two alternative members.

The Disciplinary Committee shall investigate the case and recommend an appropriate penalty, if any, should be imposed in each case. This recommendation from the Disciplinary Committee will then be presented by the Registrar at the Examinations Board for approval.

Where the Disciplinary Committee has made a finding that there has been a breach of an examination regulation, for example plagiarism, it shall make such recommendations to the Examination Board as it considers appropriate to include but not limited to a recommendation.

- **That a Learner's marks shall be reduced**
- That the Learner be deemed not to have passed their exam
- That other examinations sat by the same Learner at the same examination sitting be declared void
- That other forms of assessment undertaken in that academic year by the same Learner be declared void.
- That the Learner be suspended from College for a specified period

Recommendations of a disciplinary meeting are to be made known to the Course Director and Dean of School immediately after the meeting and in advance of Assessment/examination boards, including progress boards

4.22. Appeals Committee

The decision of the Examinations Board on major offences may be appealed to the

Appeals Committee appointed by the Academic Council and shall be constituted as follows:

President
Three members of the Academic Council who did not sit on the original Disciplinary Committee
One Learner representative who sits on the Academic Council who did not sit on the original Disciplinary Committee
Recording Secretary

Four members shall constitute a quorum.

The President may nominate an alternative when s/he is unavailable.

In the event of a tied vote the President or nominee shall exercise the casting vote. Notice of Appeal from decisions of the Examinations Committee shall be lodged in writing within 10 working days of receiving formal notification of the decision or penalty of the Examinations Committee. The written notice of appeal must state briefly the grounds on which the appeal is made. The Appeals Committee shall endeavour to reach its decision by majority and shall in its discretion decide the appropriate penalty, if any, that should be imposed in each case.

Decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be final.

4.23. Major Offences

Without prejudice to the general power of the Registrar to decide whether an alleged offence is major or minor, the following examples would normally be regarded as major offences. This list is not exclusive.

Plagiarism or the use of unauthorised material during an examination/assessment or other breaches of the examination regulations
Failure to adhere to Invigilators instructions during an examination/assessment
Furnishing false information to the College with intent to deceive
Forgery, alteration or misuse of College documents, records or identity cards
Verbal or Physical abuse of another person
Malicious destruction, damage or misuse of College property or of private property on the campus
Illegal retention of library materials
Forcible occupation of College buildings and grounds
Unwarranted interference with the College safety equipment, fire fighting equipment and alarm systems

4.23.1. Rules Regarding both Major and Minor Offences

The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to major offences and minor offences equally. A member of the Disciplinary Committee may not be a member of any Appeals Committee considering the same case.
No member of the Disciplinary Committee or of the Appeals Committee shall adjudicate in any case in which he/she is to prosecute or be a witness. An accused person has the right to speak in his/her own defence and call witnesses, including character witnesses, at hearings of the Disciplinary Committee and of the Appeals Committee.

Persons reporting instances may also call witnesses. An accused person may also be represented at any hearing. The Disciplinary Committee and the Appeals Committee may seek advice from any expert or person they think fit and shall have the right to invite such persons to attend at any hearing of the Disciplinary Committee or the Appeals Committee.

4.23.2.   Penalties

The committees shall determine the actual penalty to be applied having regard to the seriousness of the incident and the guidelines set out in this manual. These penalties may be applied either separately or in combination. Without prejudice to its right to impose such penalties or make such recommendations as are considered appropriate in any case, the Registrar, or Disciplinary Committee, or Appeals Committee as the case may be, shall be empowered to:

Deem the candidate to be innocent of the allegation(s). In such a case the examination board shall be instructed to consider the assessment or examination results in the normal manner.

Issue a written warning to the candidate. In such a case the candidate may be informed that the written warning constitutes a formal record of breach of examination/assessment regulations.

Deem the candidate to have failed all or part of the assessments or examinations for the stage or year of the programme. In such a case the committee shall determine the period of time which shall elapse before the Learner is entitled to be reassessed.

Suspend a Learner from College for any specified period of time.

Expel a Learner from College.

Prohibit a Learner from sitting any examination or assessment.

May impose such fines as are considered reasonable.

May require a Learner to attend additional or other lectures or programmes or undertake additional academic work.

4.23.3.   Notification Procedure

Academic Affairs shall notify the Registrar in writing and without delay of a suspected regulations offence. The head invigilator present at the examination/assessment will forward a full report of events to the Director of Learner Life. In the event of a suspected serious breach of Examination Regulations a Disciplinary Committee will be formed by the Registrar.

In such cases, the candidate shall be notified in writing through the office of the Registrar at least three days in advance of the meeting of the Disciplinary Committee in relation to the following:

- The precise allegation(s)
- The entitlement to present a response either orally or in writing to the Disciplinary Committee
- The entitlement to be accompanied or be represented at all hearings conducted by the Disciplinary Committee

- The inquiry schedule.

The candidate shall notify the Registrar of the person(s) to accompany him/her, and their status at a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee.

The Learner will be notified of the decision of the Examinations Board within 10 days of Examinations Board meeting.

4.23.4. Inquiry Procedure

The Director of Student Services will forward all relevant information to the Registrar.

The Disciplinary Committee shall assemble to consider the allegation(s) as soon as possible following the reporting of the incident. Each case(s) shall be considered separately and only on the basis of unambiguous evidence available to the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee alone shall adjudicate on the allegation(s) based on written and oral submissions and **shall determine the penalty to be applied. Its decision must be a majority decision. Other than the Recording Secretary, no other person shall be present during the period of adjudication.**

The reports and/or written submissions shall be made available to the Learner in advance of the committee hearing.

The candidate shall be notified in writing through the office of the Registrar of the outcome of the deliberations

4.24. Recheck, Review & Feedback Procedures

4.24.1. Guidelines for Examination/Continuous Assessment Recheck & Review

The Learner should apply to the Programme Co-ordinator for module feedback. The Learner is advised to do so prior to a request for an examination review.

The learner may apply for a re-check following receipt of a transcript following Semester 1 or Semester 2 results. The learner must apply for the request by the date published by the Examinations Office. Where recheck necessitates a change of a provisional result following Semester 1, the learner should be made aware that this result remains provisional and is subject to alteration at the final examination board

The learner can apply for review following receipt of the learner official transcript of combined Semester One and Semester Two results. The learner must apply for the request by the date published annually by the examinations office. In the case of FETAC learners, this must be at least 14 days after the publication of the outcome of the assessment board (results approval panel)

Re-check means the administrative operation of checking the recording and the addition of marks. Review means the re-consideration in detail of all or part of the existing examination material where feasible by the internal and external examiner(s).

A re-check/review can be applied to any examined assessment i.e., project and/or examination script comprised in a module. The outcome of a re-check/review may mean a result is found to be higher or lower than initially indicated.

Learners should note that a re-check does not entail a re-marking or re-evaluation of an examined assessment; it is a process to ensure that the collation of marks allocated is correctly totalled.

4.24.2. Procedures for the Rechecking of Examination Results and Continuous Assessment

The Re-check Application form Appendix 3(AR2) of this manual, should be completed (Sections A and B) and returned to the Registrar within five working days on receipt of results. Inability to consult the notice board or unawareness of the publication date of results will not be deemed sufficient reason to grant an extension.

These forms are available from the Learner Life Office and can be downloaded from the College Website www.ncirl.ie. **The fee of €32 per module must be included with** the application. This fee will be refunded if the re-check is deemed successful.

Please note that it is the responsibility of the Learner to ensure that they comply with the correct procedures or the request will not be processed.

4.24.3. The Re-Check Process

The Registrar will request the relevant examination scripts, projects and assessment

material, where feasible, to be made available by the Examinations Office. There will be external verification that the percentage mark on the learner transcript for a module has been awarded in respect of all answers, part answers and any assessment material to have been included in the result.

4.24.4. Procedures for the Reviewing of Examination Results and Continuous Assessment

A review will not be considered except under the three criteria listed below: If the learner wish to query a particular mark and do not have specific grounds for review under the three criteria below, the learner can request a re-check (AR2) Appendix 3 to this manual.

A request for a review automatically includes a re-check.

The outcome of a review may mean a result is found to be higher or lower than that initially indicated. An application for a review will only be considered if it is based on one of the following grounds:

The examination regulations of the College have not been properly implemented and where there is a prima facia case that this has had an adverse affect on a **candidate's performance.**
Or
Compassionate circumstances related to t**he candidate's examination situation** were not made known to the college, for a justifiable reason, by the candidate prior to or during the programme of, the examination concerned and of which the Examinations Board were unaware.
Or
There has been an error in the recording and addition of marks on a particular paper (applications for an administrative recheck of the recording and addition of marks)

A Learner may <u>NOT</u> appeal against the academic judgement of the examiners.

4.24.5. Procedures to be followed to request a review

The Review Application Form (AR1) (see Appendix 2) should be completed (Sections A,B,C,D,E) and returned to the Registrar within five working days on receipt of results. These forms are available form the Academic Affairs Office, Information D**esk and can be downloaded from the College Website; www.ncirl.ie. The fee of €80** per module must be included with the application. This fee will be refunded if the learner review is deemed successful. The learner must attach with this form any relevant medical or supporting documentation that the learner wishes to be assessed with the learner application. This is documentation that has not been previously made available to relevant staff and Examinations Board.

It is the responsibility of the Learner to ensure that they comply with the correct procedures or the learner request will not be processed.

The submission must identify the element or elements of the examination in relation to which the review is being sought. It must also specify the grounds on which the review is sought and must contain all information, which the candidate requires to have taken into account in the review.

4.24.6. The Review Process

The document presented for review shall be considered by the Review Committee. The Learner shall have the right, accompanied if desired by another person, to appear personally before the Committee.

The Review Committee shall be constituted as follows: President or nominee (i.e. Registrar), 3 members of Academic Council and one learner representative who sits on Academic council, Programme Directors,   Four members shall constitute a quorum.

The Review Committee shall endeavour to reach its decision by majority vote. In the event of a tied vote, the President or his/her nominee shall exercise a casting vote.

The Review Committee shall make known its decision in writing to the Learner and shall notify Academic Council of its findings. The Chairperson of Academic Council shall then take appropriate action. There shall be no appeal from the decision of Academic Council. The decisions of any Examination Boards, Standing Committees, the Review Committee or Academic Council shall not be invalidated by reason of the fact that such bodies may from time to time comprise some of the same members.

In the case of a review above being upheld by the Examinations and Awards Committee, the candidate will normally be given the opportunity to re-sit the examination at the next available session and to have the result for the session appealed to be recorded as deferred.

4.24.7. Feedback Procedures

The purpose of feedback is to provide academic information and direction to Learners after an assessment has been completed and to assist in the development of learning. Feedback should explain to Learners what they are doing correctly and incorrectly. Also, feedback should be forward looking and refer to a specific task.

Feedback refers both to quantitative and qualitative forms. Feedback will not alter the mark awarded. It is a different process to either a review or re-check procedure, information on both has already been   detailed in this manual. The following sections detail the feedback procedures to be used for:

- Continuous assessment
- Terminal semester examinations

Overall Continuous Assessment (CA) Feedback Process.

A summary of the overall CA result should be communicated to Learners in advance of the terminal semester examination. Lecturers will conduct a class feedback session reviewing how the assessment task was handled, highlighting common errors and key areas for improvement. Lecturers are encouraged to demonstrate model answers of all CA work. Names of Learners attending the class feedback session will be recorded on a sign-in sheet. Lecturers may distribute a handout at the class feedback session.

The detail, date and type of feedback that will be available to learners will be published in the programme & module assessment strategy that will be available to each learner

Lecturers may distribute individual feedback sheets. The return of any element of CA

work to Learners is at the discretion of the individual lecturer, the lecturer must retain however a copy of all CA works for individual Learners for a year and a day.

Only a Learner who has attended the class feedback session may request additional individual feedback. In exceptional cases i.e. illness or family bereavement a Learner who has not attended the class feedback may also apply. Individual feedback must be applied for in writing using the Individual Feedback Request Form highlighting the specific reason for the request.

This request must be given to the Programme Co-ordinator using the Individual Feedback Request Form (Appendix 1) and received within five working days of the class feedback session.

The Programme Coordinator will then forward the request to the relevant lecturer and examinations office for scheduling where relevant. This meeting must take place prior to the terminal examination.

4.24.8. Terminal Semester Examinations

The Results for each module for each semester will be published on the college website and notice boards. All Learners will also be given an individual transcript from the Academic Affairs office detailing their module results for the First Semester. Early in semester two, lecturers will conduct a class feedback session on semester one examinations.

A special one-hour class feedback session will be scheduled by the relevant Programme Co-ordinator in liaison with the individual lecturer for lecturers not teaching the class in semester two. Non-returning lecturers will provide a feedback report and handover session.

Names of Learners attending the class feedback session will be recorded on a sign-in sheet.

Lecturers may distribute a handout at the class feedback session. Only a Learner who has attended the class feedback session may request additional individual feedback. In exceptional cases i.e. illness or family bereavement a Learner who has not attended the class feedback may also apply. Individual feedback must be applied for in writing using the attached form highlighting the specific reason for the request. This request must be given to the Programme Co-ordinator using the Individual Feedback Request Form and received within five working days of the class feedback session.

The Programme Co-ordinator will then forward the request to the relevant lecturer and examinations office for scheduling where relevant. This meeting must take place prior to the terminal examination.

After the publication of semester one and two examination results all lecturers will make themselves available for one day. This day will be published as part of the academic calendar and will take into account the five day rule for applications for rechecks and reviews as outlined in 4.3.8.7

After the publication of semester one and two examination results, Learners seeking an individual feedback meeting must apply in writing to the relevant Programme Co-ordinator within five working days of publication of results on the website and notice boards.

Individual lecturers will liaise with relevant Programme Co-ordinators to arrange appointments.

A learner may also make an appointment to discuss their overall Programme performance with the Programme Director during the feedback day.

4.24.9. Review of examination scripts

The examinations office will make available the relevant examination scripts for the individual lecturer to collect without delay. After the appointment between Learner and lecturer has taken place the script(s) will be returned to the examinations office Academic Affairs, without delay. The examinations officer will record all scripts that are withdrawn from the office and record them back in when they are received from the individual lecturer.